CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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INDIA CAN BE FULL-STACK AI NATION: PICHAI

Google unveils India-US subsea cable initiative, USD 30 mn AI science challenge, new skilling push; India can be AI 'User-Builder-Shaper'

NEW DELHI

Google CEO Sundar Pichai on Wednesday said India has a rare opportunity to emerge as a "full-stack" player in artificial intelligence (AI) -- not only as a massive user base but also as a builder and shaper of the technology.

"I think India is in a unique position at this moment. It has a chance to play a big role in all three --as a user, as a builder and as a shaper of AI," he said.

"The country is poised for an "extraordinary trajectory" in AI", he said and emphasised Google's commitment to partnering in the country's AI transformation. "AI is the biggest platform shift of our lifetime," Pichai said, highlighting its potential to transform sectors ranging from healthcare to agriculture.

Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, he noted that India's diversity, language ecosystem, and robust digital public infrastructure

make it a "powerful foundation for innovation" and a blueprint for democratizing AI globally.

AI must be built on inclusivity

He emphasised that AI adoption must prioritise trust, safety and inclusivity. "AI systems must work across multiple Indian languages and adapt to local contexts, ensuring real-world benefits," he said.

India-America Connect initiative announced

He also announced the India-America Connect Initiative, a project to deploy new subsea cable routes to enhance AI connectivity between the United States, India, and several locations across the Southern Hemisphere. "Google has full-stack connectivity in India, and I have never been more excited about the future we are building together," he added.

What Pichai says

- India can be a global leader in AI development
- India's investment in research and tech will shape its AI future
- AI could transform India's education, healthcare, and startups

AI Hub and infra boost worth USD 15 bn

Pichai further referred to Google's earlier announcement of a USD 15 billion AI hub in India, which will house gigawatt-scale copute capacity and an international subsea cable gateway, bringing jobs and advanced AI infrastructure to the country.

Large-scale skilling and education initiatives

He also unveiled ambitious skilling programmes, including a Google AI Professional Certificate Programme in English and Hindi, targeting students and early-career professionals.

Google unveiled ambitious skilling programmes which will help the youth for the AI-driven future. These will further include a Google AI Professional Certificate Programme in English and Hindi. It will further be designed for students and early-career professionals.

The company will also collaborate with 'Karma Yogi Bharat' to support over 20 million public servants with AI tools. Additionally, partnerships with Atal Tinkering Labs aim to introduce generative AI tools in 10,000 schools.

Google further announced a USD 30 million AI for Science Impact Challenge to accelerate global research.

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India shaping up to take AI leadership role: Sunak

Former British prime minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday said India is well positioned to take leadership role in Artificial Intelligegnce (AI).

Speaking at the NDTV AI Summit 2026 at ITC Maurya in New Delhi, Sunak said, "India has recognised that leadership in technology doesn't depend on inventing it. It depends on how effectively you deploy it. By focusing on mass adoption, supported by deep talent pool in India, strong public infrastructure, and public that's very supportive of the technology, India is well positioned to take leadership role in AI."

He said AI is going to change the labour market and as a result, some jobs will be lost. "I think AI is going to change the labour market. Some jobs will be lost; I think many more will be redesigned. I think history shows us that societies flourish when we manage that transition well," the former UK PM said.

The scale of AI's runaway growth is such that companies are investing 20 times more than the entire Manhattan Project, he said while drawing comparison between the investment on AI and the historic project that led to the building of atomic weapons. The Manhattan Project in 1945 cost approximately $2.2 billion dollars, equivalent to over $30 billion dollars today, adjusted for inflation, he said.

He further said the AI debate has moved from tech to strategy.

India will leapfrog in AI like it did with mobile internet: Qualcomm CEO

India leapfrogged in mobile internet, pivoted smartphone revolution, and the same is going to be the case with AI, said Qualcomm CEO and President Cristiano Amon. Speaking to the media on the sidelines of India AI Impact Summit 2026, Amon said the opportunity for India to be in the leadership position is real, and the time for India is now to bring disruption in AI technology. "India was very good at leapfrogging to the mobile internet. I think as the smartphone revolution happened in India, as mobile broadband happened in India, India leapfrogged into the future of the internet. I think the same is going to be true for AI, especially as AI is now going to be everywhere," he added.

WHEN 'AI' CONNECTS FRIENDS...

French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday shared an AI-generated picture of himself with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in celebration of India-France friendship. "When friends connect, innovation follows. Ready for The AI Impact Summit!" Macron posted on X, referring to the ongoing India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

Chinese Robodog row: Galgotias University exits AI Summit expo, tenders apology

NEW DELHI

Galgotias University, facing fire from all quarters, including people at large for roughly twenty-four hours, was sent packing on Wednesday evening from the AI Summit Expo, over the fiasco and national embarrassment it brought for itself as well as the nation over the Chinese robot dog.

The controversy emanated at the AI Summit Expo on Tuesday, over the portrayal of a Chinese robotic dog as the varsity's pavilion, with one of its professors explaining its AI-enabled features and describing robodog as a 'landmark innovation' by the varsity students.

The university, initially reluctant to express regret, issued a public apology, stating that it was "apologising profusely" over the irresponsible and misleading conduct at the Expo. "We at Galgotias University, wish to apologise profusely for the confusion created at the recent AI Summit. One of our representatives, manning the pavilion, was ill-informed. She was not aware of the technical origins of the product and in her enthusiasm of being on camera, gave factually incorrect information even though she was not authorised to speak to the press," it stated.

Even tech is copy-paste: Siddu slams Centre on Robodog row

Amid the Galgotias University's Robodog controversy, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched a scathing attack on the ruling BJP government, accusing them of 'copy-paste'. In an X post on Wednesday, he said, "First, they copied UPA Schemes and Congress guarantees and rebranded them as their own grand vision. Now, even technology is copy-paste." "The Modi government does not believe in 'Make in India,' instead, "they believe in 'Fake in India'," he alleged. He said the incident has brought "international embarrassment" to the country on such a prominent platform as the AI Impact Summit.

Maha scraps 5% Muslim quota in jobs, education

MUMBAI

Maharashtra government's Social Justice Department on Tuesday issued a Government Resolution (GR) cancelling its 2014 order that had granted a 5% reservation to the Muslim community in educational institutions and government and semi-government jobs-- a provision that had already been legally invalidated over a decade ago.

The reservation was introduced in July 2014 through an ordinance, classifying Muslims under the Special Backward CLass-A (SBC-A) category. However, the policy was challenged in the Bomaby High Court, whcih stayed its implementation in November 2014.

As the ordinace was not enacted into law by the state legislature within the stipulated deadline of December 2014, it lapsed automatically.

The Supreme COurt later set aside the quota while deciding a Special Leave Petition, rendering the provision inoperative.

Despite the lapse of the ordinance and the top court's order, the state had not formally rescinded the resolution until now.

With the latest order, the government declared all decisions and communications linked to the Muslim quota void. It implies that no admissions or recruitment can be made under the 5% reservation, and no caste certificate will be issued under the SBC-A category.

Opposition terms move 'anti-minority'

Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad termed the decision as "harmful to democracy" and said it would push the Muslim community away from the mainstream. "Instead of strengthening the process, the government has cancelled earlier procedures citing interim stay orders of the High Court and lapse of the ordinance. On one hand, the BJP speaks of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' (development for all), and on the other hand it blocks the path to securing necessary documents for reservation," she said.

She also sought to know the stands of ruling allies Shiv Sena and NCP in this decision.

ECI sets March 16 date for biennial RS polls

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday announced the schedule for holding biennial elections to 37 Rajya Sabha seats across 10 states, which are falling vacant on different dates in April. Polling will be held on March 16.

The seats becoming vacant are represented by members from Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Telangana.

As per the schedule, the election process will begin with the issue of notification on February 26. The last date for filing nominations is March 5, with scrutiny scheduled for March 6. Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations until March 9.

Voting will take place on March 16, with counting of votes at 5 pm on the same day, the ECI said, adding that the entire election process will conclude by March 20.

The Commission also specified that only integrated violet colour sketch pens of a pre fixed specification, provided by the Returning Officer, are to be used for marking preferences on ballot papers. The ECI, in the press note, said, "No other pen shall be used for marking preferences in the above said elections."

LS POLL SCHEDULE

- **37 seats in 10 states** (Maharashtra, TN, WB, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Telangana and HP)
- Notification: Feb 26
- Last date to file nominations: March 5
- Scrutiny of nominations: March 6
- Deadline to withdraw nominations: March 9
- Polling: from 9 am to 4 pm on March 16
- Counting: March 16
- Entire process will complete by March 20

US deploys 50+ fighter jets to Middle East amid tentions

TEHRAN

The United States military is steadily building its air and naval assets near Iran, even as Tehran officials agreed to return to negotiating with a new proposal in two weeks.

Over 50 US fighter jets, including F-35s, F-22s, and F-16s, have moved to West Asia over the last 24 hours, according to the American publication Axios. This comes even as US officials said Washington and Tehran "made progress in nuclear talks" in Geneva on Tuesday. They, however, stressed that "there are still a lot of details to discuss," suggesting there are still chances of an imminent military clash.

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said discussions were more "constructive" than the first round held in Muscat earlier this month, claiming that the two sides had agreed on the "guiding principles" for a potential deal over Iran's nuclear programme.

US military buildup near Iran

The US-Iran negotiations came as the Trump administration amassed heavy military forces near Iran for possible attack amid Washington's increasing pressure on Tehran over its nuclear plans.

SC JUNKS HC ORDER

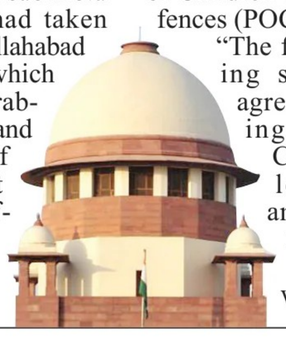
'Grabbing breasts, pulling pyjama string attempt to rape'

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has ruled that grabbing of breasts and pulling the pyjama string amount to "attempt to rape", setting aside a controversial Allahabad High Court order which said these were only "preparation to commit rape."

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and NV Anjaria said the impugned order was liable to be set aside on account of the "patently erroneous application of the settled principles of criminal jurisprudence."

The court passed the order on February 10 on a suo motu plea in which it had taken cognisance of the Allahabad High Court order, which stated that mere grabbing of the breasts and pulling the string of a pyjama did not amount to the offence of rape.



While setting aside the HC judgement, the top court restored the original stringent charge of attempt to rape against two accused under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

"The facts alleged being so, we cannot agree with the finding of the High Court that the allegations only amount to preparation, but not an attempt, towards the commission of the offence of rape," SC observed.

"The attempt made by the accused persons appears clearly and inevitably leads us to conclude that, prima facie, a case for invoking the provisions of attempt to commit rape has been made out by the complainant and the prosecution. The impugned judgement, thus, is liable to be set aside on account of the patently erroneous application of the settled principles of criminal jurisprudence," the bench said. The apex court said a bare perusal of these allegations leaves no "modicum of doubt" that the case sought to be made out is that the accused persons proceeded with a pre-determined intent to commit an offence under Section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

"The impugned judgement dated March 17, 2025, is set aside, and the original summons order dated June 23, 2023, passed by the Special Judge (POCSO), Kasganj, is restored," the bench said.

QUICK READ

One Remanded, Second Gets Anticipatory Bail in Areca Nut Theft

Puttur

Kadaba police have arrested one of two suspects in an areca nut theft case registered on the complaint of Satish, aged 36 and resident of Alankaru village in Kadaba taluk. The case, numbered 11/2026 and filed under Section 303(2) BNS at Kadaba Police Station on January 25, 2026, involved two persons stealing areca nuts from a plantation and fleeing the spot. During the course of investigation, the first accused, Jayanth M., aged 28 and hailing from Kayimana village in Kadaba taluk, was taken into custody. He was produced before the court, which ordered his remand to judicial custody. The second accused, Lingappa, aged 36 and from Kaniyuru village in Kadaba taluk, obtained anticipatory bail from the court. Officers have also recovered the entire quantity of areca nuts that were stolen in the incident.

Brand-New Scooter Gutted by Sudden Flames

Udupi

A scooter parked in the courtyard of a house in Panjimaru Palame near Shirva suddenly caught fire and burned down completely on the afternoon of February 17, Tuesday. The vehicle belonged to a resident of Palame who had bought the brand-new Honda Dio scooter from Mangaluru only a month earlier. Flames appeared without any warning while the scooter stood stationary, spreading within moments and reducing the entire machine to ashes. Officers from the Shirva police station arrived at the location soon after and conducted a detailed inspection of the scene. This fresh incident comes shortly after another vehicle fire in the same vicinity. On the night of February 9, a Maruti Dzire car traveling from Mangaluru to Shirva erupted into flames right in the middle of the road. With the scooter now completely destroyed, the Shirva area has seen two vehicles fall victim to fire within the span of a week.

Ramadan Fasting to Commence on Feb 19 in M'luru and Udupi Districts

Mangaluru/Udupi

Dakshina Kannada District Qazi Alhaj Twaka Ahmad Musliyar has directed that the sacred month of Ramadan fasting will begin on Thursday, February 19, following the absence of any confirmed information on the sighting of the first crescent moon on Tuesday. S.M. Rashid Haji, treasurer of Mangaluru's Zeenath Baksh Centre Juma Masjid and Eidgah Masjid, conveyed this official directive on behalf of the Qazi. Sources indicate that the same fasting schedule is also expected to be followed across Udupi district. Ullal Qazi A.P. Abubakkar Musliyar has confirmed that Ramadan will commence from Thursday, according to a formal release issued by Ullal Darga President B.G. Haneef Haji.

Lone Bull Elephant Ravages Areca Groves

SHIVAMOGGA

A solitary tusker continues its unchecked raids on Puradalu village farms, snapping dozens of valuable areca palms and coconut trees while frustrated growers accuse forest officials of total inaction despite repeated warnings.

Persistent elephant trouble has once again struck agricultural fields across Puradalu village in Shivamogga. A single bull elephant broke into several private plantations late on Tuesday night and caused extensive damage to both areca nut and coconut crops.

The incident occurred around 10 pm near the Beluru area within the village. The animal forced its way into the holdings of four local cultivators and went on a destructive spree, felling trees at will.

D. Gummnabailu Siddappa reportedly lost more than 20 areca palms along with several coconut trees. Hunasemakki Annappa saw over 12 areca trees destroyed. Gantemane Murthy counted at least five of his areca palms snapped off, and Kidadumbe Vishwanath suffered the loss of more than 10 areca trees.

Growers have openly voiced strong resentment toward the forest department. They have repeatedly submitted requests for concrete steps to stop the wild elephant's repeated visits, yet no preventive measures have reportedly been taken.

The community earlier gathered in front of the Deputy Conservator of Forests office, staged a protest, and handed over a formal petition seeking effective control of the animal raids. Despite those efforts, the problem has only continued.

Affected residents now call on the forest department to act immediately and bring the ongoing elephant nuisance under control before further damage occurs to their livelihoods.

MP Pushes for Rapid NH 169 Land Takeover

UDUPI

Lawmaker directs officials to finish acquisition swiftly and fix compensation at realistic market rates so affected families in Karkala, Bajagoli and Mala can rebuild their lives without delay.

Member of Parliament Kota Srinivas Poojari has instructed senior officers to complete the land acquisition process for National Highway 169 passing through Karkala at the earliest and to determine compensation for landowners through proper scientific valuation based on current market conditions.

The directions were issued at a special review meeting held on Tuesday inside the District Collector's conference hall at Manipal. The session examined progress on highway works and compensation payments for properties coming under the Karkala assembly constituency limits, specifically in Karkala, Bajagoli and Mala areas.

Local residents along the corridor have lived in their houses and cultivated their agricultural fields for many years, yet they must now part with these holdings to allow the road development project to proceed. Poojari told officials that timely and fair compensation matching present market rates would help these families reshape their future and urged them to treat this matter with utmost seriousness.

He also called for all national highway projects across the district to be taken up on priority and finished quickly. The MP specifically asked authorities to fast-track land acquisition formalities for the section from Malpe to Karavali Junction and wrap them up without delay so actual highway construction can begin.

District Collector Swaroopa T.K. addressed the participants and directed concerned departments to conduct accurate surveys of every house, agricultural plot and other assets falling under acquisition, then fix compensation strictly according to real-time market values.

Karkala MLA Sunil Kumar, who attended the meeting, stressed that owners of acquired houses or farmland must receive the highest possible compensation amounts. He noted that landowners along NH 169A in the neighbouring district have already been paid significantly higher sums.

This variation in compensation for the same road has created confusion and uncertainty among property holders, and he asked officials to settle all payments exactly as provided under the law.

Additional District Collector Abid Gadyal, Divisional Forest Officer Ruthren P., Additional Superintendent of Police Sudhakar Nayak, Assistant Commissioner Rashmi, district-level implementation officers, tahsildars, National Highways Authority engineers and contractors were among those present at the meeting.

Free Bridge Course, Competitive Exam Coaching Launched

CHIKKAMAGALURU

A city-based pre-university institution has partnered with a private academic training body to offer free bridge courses and competitive exam coaching for science students, aiming to strengthen foundational learning and career readiness.

The initiative will be implemented at TMS Pre-University College in collaboration with Lakshya Academy of Science. College authorities said experienced faculty drawn from various places will handle the training, supported by a team of energetic in-house lecturers to ensure quality instruction.

According to organisers, the programme is designed to help students transition smoothly into higher-level science learning while preparing them for competitive entrance examinations. Infrastructure and academic arrangements have been upgraded to support focused learning and structured mentoring.

As part of the programme, free bridge training classes for students who have completed First PUC in the science stream will begin on the 23rd of this month. The bridge course aims to reinforce conceptual clarity in core science subjects and prepare students for the academic demands of Second PUC.

Officials added that once the Second PUC board examinations conclude, intensive coaching will be conducted for national and state-level competitive examinations such as CET, NEET and JEE. The coaching will focus on problem-solving skills, exam strategies and time management to improve student performance.

College representatives said the move reflects a broader commitment to accessible, high-quality education, especially for students aspiring to careers in engineering and medicine. By offering the programme free of cost, the institution hopes to remove financial barriers and encourage meritorious students to pursue competitive pathways.

Parents and students have been invited to contact the academy's help desk for enrolment and further details. Administrators expressed confidence that the integrated coaching model will enhance academic confidence and provide structured guidance during a crucial stage of student development.

Education observers noted that such bridge programmes are increasingly important in helping students adjust to syllabus intensity while aligning classroom learning with entrance exam requirements. Authorities said the initiative is expected to benefit a large number of science aspirants in and around Chikkamagaluru.

Tight Security, Student-Friendly Measures for II PUC Exams

UDUPI

Authorities in Udupi district have rolled out an extensive preparedness plan to ensure the smooth and fair conduct of the II PUC examinations beginning February 28, with Deputy Commissioner Swaroopa T. K. stressing that student safety, transparency and exam integrity will be top priorities.

Reviewing arrangements at a preparatory meeting in Manipal office, the DC said the examination represents a crucial academic turning point for thousands of students and must be conducted in a calm, systematic and error-free environment. Officials were instructed to create a fear-free atmosphere and strictly enforce all examination guidelines.

A total of 17,181 candidates will appear for the examinations across 29 centres in the district. The figure includes 16,657 fresh candidates, 383 private candidates, 135 repeaters and six students in the improvement category. Exams will be held from 10 am to 1 pm on scheduled dates.

Entry into examination halls will be permitted only on production of valid hall tickets. The district administration has imposed a strict ban on mobile phones, smart watches and all electronic gadgets inside centres.

The DC warned that spreading misinformation about question paper leaks or circulating fake papers on social media constitutes a punishable offence, and police have been instructed to act firmly against offenders.

To maintain order, prohibitory restrictions will be enforced within a 200-metre radius of all centres during exam hours. Photocopy shops, cyber cafés and computer centres nearby must remain closed to prevent misuse. Special three-member committees have been formed to oversee secure transportation of question papers under police escort using GPS-enabled vehicles. Storage and distribution will be monitored round the clock through CCTV surveillance at the treasury.

Officials have been directed to ensure that all centres are equipped with CCTV cameras and essential amenities, including proper seating, lighting, fans and drinking water. Webcasting arrangements and uninterrupted power supply are also being prioritised.

Medical teams will be stationed at examination venues, while additional police deployment will be arranged at sensitive centres. Transport support will be coordinated with Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation to facilitate student travel.

DDPU Maruthi and senior district officials were present at the meeting, which focused on inter-departmental coordination to deliver a secure and student-friendly examination process.

Gaganyaan Mission Key Step Toward India's Space Station: ISRO Scientist

CHIKKAMAGALURU

India's human spaceflight programme is laying the groundwork for a future national space station, an ISRO scientist said while addressing students at an academic interaction in the city.

Speaking at an event titled "Orbit Talks – Space Technology and Career Opportunities" hosted by Sahyadri Institute of Commerce, Srinivas H L described the Gaganyaan mission as a milestone that will shape India's long-term space ambitions.

Addressing BCA students, he outlined the concept of a future Indian space station and explained how current missions are building technological capabilities required for sustained human presence in space. He also highlighted the expanding career opportunities for students in space science and allied technology sectors.

The scientist detailed the role of satellites in national development, explaining their applications in communication, navigation, climate monitoring and disaster management. He also spoke about the thermal challenges of space missions and the temperature control systems required during satellite launches.

Students were shown visual presentations on pre-launch testing procedures, including vibration tests, and a video showcase of achievements from the Chandrayaan-3 mission. Srinivas said ISRO is expected to see increased recruitment over the next two years and guided students on application procedures and skill requirements.

Principal Ullas E G emphasised the importance of technological literacy and skill development to remain competitive in emerging industries. He urged students to cultivate curiosity and adaptability in preparation for future careers.

Faculty coordinator Srilalitha K and student representatives participated in organising the session, which concluded with an interactive exchange. Participants described the programme as informative and motivating, offering clarity on careers in space science and innovation-driven fields.

Fourth Arrest in Malpe Shipyard Navy Secrets Leak Case

UDUPI

Udupi police have arrested another accused in the sensitive case involving unauthorised sharing of Indian Navy-related confidential information from Malpe Cochin Shipyard workers to Pakistan for illegal monetary gains. With this arrest, the number of persons detained in the case has gone up to four.

The latest accused is Alif Islam, aged 21, originally from West Bengal and presently residing in Marayu village of Idukki district in Kerala.

Earlier, Gujarat native Hirendra Kumar was arrested on December 21, 2025, while Rohit and Santri from Uttar Pradesh were taken into custody on November 21, 2025.

All the accused are alleged to have passed on secret lists containing Indian Navy ship numbers and other classified details to Pakistan through WhatsApp and Facebook in return for unlawful benefits. The case was originally registered at Malpe Police Station.

Continuing the probe, police arrested the fifth accused, Alif Islam, on February 16. He was produced before the court, which ordered his judicial remand.

Alif Islam is listed as the fifth accused in the case. There is suspicion that the arrested accused Alif Islam may be a Bangladeshi citizen. Once his nationality is confirmed, further legal proceedings will be initiated accordingly.

Legal Awareness Essential to Ensure Equal Justice: Judge Rajeshwari Hegde

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Legal awareness is critical to ensuring that every citizen receives equal justice guaranteed under the Constitution, Principal District and Sessions Judge and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) chairperson Rajeshwari N Hegde said on Wednesday.

She was speaking after inaugurating a four-day training programme for para-legal volunteers at the Abdul Nazeer Sab Hall of the Zilla Panchayat in Chikkamagaluru. The programme has been organised jointly by the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, Outlaw India Foundation, the District Legal Services Authority and the District Advocates' Association.

Highlighting the rural composition of the country, Judge Hegde said a large section of people remain unaware of the legal entitlements available to them. Although the Constitution promises equal justice, lack of education and awareness prevents many from accessing remedies, she noted. Para-legal volunteers therefore play a crucial role in acting as a bridge between the public and the legal system.

Explaining with examples, she said that in emergencies such as road accidents, victims are entitled to compensation and legal remedies, but awareness is key to asserting such rights. To ensure that justice reaches all sections of society, legal services authorities were constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, she added.

Judge Hegde described LokAdalats as an effective platform for resolving disputes amicably and reducing court burden. She urged volunteers to guide citizens toward such forums and provide basic legal counselling. Free legal aid is available to persons with annual incomes below ₹3 lakh, as well as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, children and other vulnerable groups, she said.

She emphasised that volunteers must actively identify those in need and connect them with the District Legal Services Authority. The four-day training will cover various laws and procedures through expert sessions, she added, stressing that the programme should translate into tangible benefits for the public rather than remain a formality.

District Advocates' Association president D. B. Sujendra presided over the function. Senior Civil Judge and DLSA Member Secretary V. Hanumanthappa, judges Kulkarni and Prakash, trainers K. Vandana and S. Tushita from Outlaw India Foundation, and para-legal volunteers were present.

QUICK READ

Woman Dies After Auto-Rickshaw Flips

Bantwal

A tragic road accident in Bantwal claimed the life of a woman on Tuesday when her auto-rickshaw overturned following a chain of collisions at Kadegoli. Vishalakshi, aged 45 and a resident of Mangaluru, was travelling from Mangaluru towards a Kalladka temple along with her sister and the sister's two children. At Kadegoli junction a bike rider coming from the opposite direction suddenly crossed into their path. The rickshaw struck the bike head-on, immediately lost control, crashed into the rear of another rickshaw that stood stationary ahead, and flipped over. Vishalakshi sustained fatal injuries in the impact while the other three passengers and the rickshaw driver escaped with only minor wounds and remained out of any danger. Bantwal traffic sub-inspector Adarsh reached the accident spot shortly afterwards, examined the scene in detail and formally registered a case to investigate the circumstances leading to the fatality.

₹15,000 Stolen from Auto Rickshaw Parked Near Hospital

Mangaluru

An auto rickshaw driver lost ₹15,000 in cash from his parked vehicle near Highland Hospital in Mangaluru city, according to a complaint lodged with Pandeshwar Police Station. The complainant, Mohammad Riyaz, parked his auto rickshaw outside the hospital premises around 4:30 p.m. on February 13 and went inside for some work. When he returned to the vehicle at approximately 6:45 p.m., he found the dashboard compartment open and the money kept inside completely missing. Pandeshwar Police have registered the theft complaint based on his statement.

Two Locals Arrested for Cricket Betting via Mobile App

Mangaluru

Kankanady Town Police arrested two men from the locality for participating in cricket betting through a mobile application on a public road near Padil. The accused individuals are Preetesh and Ranjith, both residents of the area. Acting on precise information received from informants, a team from Kankanady Town Police Station conducted a raid at the spot around 11:25 a.m. on Monday and took the two suspects into custody on the spot. Police have seized the assets used in the offence and obtained court permission to retain them for further investigation. A formal case stands registered against the accused under relevant sections.

Parents of Student Urge Home Minister to Speed Up Murder Probe

Bereaved family meets Dr. Parameshwara seeking swift justice in the tragic killing of ninth-grader Sumant.

BELTHANGADY

The grieving parents of Sumant, a ninth-standard pupil at Gerukatte High School, personally appealed to Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara for urgent action in the ongoing investigation into their son's murder.

The body of the young boy from Odilnala village in Sambolya area of Belthangady taluk was discovered in a pond inside a garden while he was on his way to the temple.

Led by KPCC General Secretary Rakshit Shivaram, the family submitted a memorandum to the minister demanding that the accused be traced quickly and justice delivered without further delay, as the inquiry has been moving at a slow pace.

After receiving the plea, Dr. Parameshwara obtained a detailed update on the case from Dakshina Kannada Superintendent of Police Arun Kumar and West Zone IGP Amit Singh. He immediately directed the officers to intensify the investigation efforts. The minister also offered words of comfort to the heartbroken parents during the meeting.

The 1,650 sqft outpost features a holding cell, workstations, and a landside control room, providing round-the-clock presence at a key access point and improving emergency readiness.

New Dedicated Police Outpost Opens at Mangaluru International Airport

MANGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara formally inaugurated a new police outpost at Mangaluru International Airport on 18 February, marking a significant step toward bolstering security at the coastal aviation hub.

Positioned right next to the airport's exit toll gate, the strategically placed facility ensures a constant police presence at one of the busiest passenger exit points, allowing for immediate intervention in any security or law-and-order situation.

The two-storey building spans 1,650 square feet and has been specially designed for efficient operations. The ground floor includes a holding cell, two dedicated workstation rooms, and an office for on-the-spot enquiries, documentation, and swift action.

The upper floor houses a lounge area and a fully equipped landside control room to monitor vehicular traffic and public spaces outside the terminal.

With passenger numbers steadily increasing and airport operations growing more complex, the new outpost addresses the critical need for stronger oversight on the landside. It works in tandem with the existing police check post at the entry toll gate, creating comprehensive coverage of both arrival and departure zones while acting as a strong deterrent against potential threats.

The inclusion of an on-site holding facility and operational workspaces means faster decision-making and reduced dependence on external police infrastructure during emergencies. The control room will further enable real-time surveillance and smoother information exchange between multiple agencies.

The development is expected to foster closer collaboration among airport management, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Airport Security Group unit, and Mangaluru City Police, leading to more coordinated preparedness and quicker response protocols.

The inauguration reflects the Karnataka government's continued focus on upgrading security infrastructure at key public facilities to meet evolving demands, ensuring a safer and more secure experience for passengers, staff, and the surrounding community.

Pet Dog Bites MESCOM Meter Reader

BELTHANGADY

A MESCOM meter reader suffered serious bite injuries from a domestic dog during routine electricity meter reading work in Kairthodi Quarters under Rai Gram Panchayat limits in Punjalkatte on February 16. The victim, Sampath, a resident of Moodloor Ira, works as a supervisor under the outsourced contract for the Bantwal MESCOM section. Due to staff shortages in meter reading, he was personally handling readings in the Kairthodi area that day. After completing the reading at one house, Sampath was walking back toward the main road to reach his bike when the dog from the house premises suddenly charged and attacked him. To escape the assault, he ran some distance, after which nearby residents rushed in and drove the animal away. The attack left Sampath with wounds on his right hand and leg. He received immediate medical attention and underwent surgical treatment at a hospital in Mangaluru.

Solar Architecture Firm Bets Big on India's Green Cities

MANGALURU

Renewable construction specialist MIR Group on Wednesday announced a major push to embed solar technology into India's building ecosystem, presenting its Net Zero Vision 2047 as a framework for sustainable urban growth.

Speaking ahead of the Sustainability & Net Zero Summit 2026, CEO Raffaele Marrazzo said the company's building-integrated photovoltaic systems allow structures to generate their own energy while maintaining design aesthetics. He described the technology as a shift from conventional rooftop solar toward fully integrated energy architecture.

Commercial Director Nitik Ratnakar said India's expanding urban infrastructure offers an opportunity to mainstream solar-enabled construction. MIR's systems, he noted, deliver high conversion efficiency and durability suited to tropical environments.

Central to the strategy is a planned green manufacturing facility in Mangaluru developed in partnership with the regional special economic zone. The unit will produce advanced facade systems, photovoltaic panels, sodium-ion storage solutions, insulation materials and smart construction films aimed at lowering emissions and improving energy efficiency.

Company executives said the project supports India's clean-energy goals while encouraging sustainable building certifications and circular resource use. Industry representatives attending the announcement described the initiative as a model for integrating industrial growth with environmental responsibility.

The summit will bring together policymakers, architects, developers and technology firms to demonstrate practical pathways for carbon-neutral construction. MIR executives said the platform is intended to accelerate adoption through partnerships, demonstrations and knowledge exchange.

Marrazzo emphasised that future cities must generate and conserve energy simultaneously, calling the initiative a blueprint for climate-responsive urban planning. Ratnakar added that scalable renewable building solutions could significantly reduce lifecycle emissions across the construction sector.

Woman Ends Life by Consuming Acid

BELTHANGADY

A 53-year-old widow from Arla in Kalmanja village under Belthangady taluk died after allegedly drinking acid on February 15.

The deceased, Gulabi, had been living alone in her house since her husband's passing. Her two daughters would visit weekly to check on her well-being and spend time with her.

On February 15 around noon, the daughters arrived at their mother's residence as usual. Upon entering, they discovered Gulabi had gone to the backyard and returned to collapse in the front veranda of the home.

Family members immediately shifted her to Ujire Hospital for initial treatment. Doctors there referred her for advanced care, and she was being transported to a hospital in Mangaluru when she passed away midway.

Reports indicate that Gulabi consumed acid typically used for processing rubber latex. The exact reason behind her decision to take her own life has not come to light so far.

Dharamasthala Police Station has registered a case in connection with the incident.

Tanush Shetty Demands Impartial Probe into Gun Threat Case After Court Orders FIR

MANGALURU

Social activist Tanush Shetty has urged authorities to conduct a completely fair and unbiased investigation into the incident where businessman Jitendra Kottary and his daughter allegedly threatened him with a firearm.

He made the appeal following a court directive to register an FIR based on his private complaint filed in a Mangaluru court.

Speaking at a press conference in the city, Tanush Shetty explained that police had initially refused to register an FIR despite his first complaint in the matter. However, when Jitendra Kottary lodged a counter-complaint against him, an FIR was promptly filed, leading to his arrest and imprisonment.

After securing release from jail, he approached the court with a private complaint, prompting the magistrate to order an investigation and registration of an FIR against Kottary and his daughter.

Tanush Shetty stressed the need for police to examine the complete CCTV footage from all relevant locations of the incident, along with medical reports, to ensure the inquiry remains independent and free from prejudice.

Social worker Prasanna Ravi was present during the press meet.

Srinivas University Chancellor Dr. C.A. A. Raghavendra Rao Passes Away at 89

MANGALURU

Founder-chairman of Srinivas Group of Institutions breathed his last on Tuesday night; public viewing and last rites scheduled for Wednesday.

Mangaluru lost one of its most respected education pioneers with the demise of Dr. C.A. A. Raghavendra Rao, the 89-year-old Chancellor of Srinivas University and founder-chairman of the renowned Srinivas Group of Institutions. He passed away late Tuesday night.

Family sources confirmed that the mortal remains would lie in state for public homage from 11 a.m. on Wednesday at the Srinivas College campus in Mukka. The final rites, accompanied by traditional religious ceremonies, was scheduled to take place in the afternoon following the public viewing.

Dr. Raghavendra Rao is survived by his wife Vijayalakshmi Rao, son C.A. Srinivas Rao (who serves as Pro-Chancellor of Srinivas University), daughter Padmini Rao, along with a vast circle of relatives, close associates, and numerous students who benefited from his guidance and vision.

Conducive Atmosphere for Development Prevails in Mangaluru, Says Home Minister Dr.Parameshwara

MANGALURU

Crime under control, peace restored, drug tips acted on swiftly; series of murders halted and communal tensions eased, minister tells media after police meet.

Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara affirmed that Mangaluru now enjoys a peaceful and development-friendly environment following effective police measures. He stated that criminal incidents have come under firm control, with law and order fully restored.

Police are responding promptly to every tip-off regarding drugs, while officers regularly visit schools and colleges to raise awareness and conduct checks during examinations.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday after a meeting with police officials, the minister highlighted that chain murders have been successfully curbed. Citizens have responded positively to the government's appeals, actively contributing to the establishment of peace. He added that no instances of unethical policing exist, as confirmed by the force itself, and the government views Mangaluru as a priority for various development initiatives.

When questioned about Home Minister Priyank Kharge's recent remark suggesting that communal clashes in the coastal region remain unchecked, Dr. Parameshwara replied that he relies solely on official police information for his statements. He acknowledged past periods of unrest but stressed that the situation has undergone a complete transformation for the better. He expressed unfamiliarity with the perspective from which his colleague made the comment.

On the Dharmasthala SIT probe, the minister explained that the Special Investigation Team must first submit its final report to the government. Only after cabinet review will the findings be made public.

Regarding the suspicious death of boy Sumant in Belthangady, Dr. Parameshwara noted that the case remains under active investigation. Police are withholding certain details at this stage to protect the probe's integrity.

Asked about giving preference to locals in police recruitment, he pointed out that even when constable positions are advertised, applications from the coastal belt tend to be low in number. He assured that suitable action would be taken whenever sufficient applications arrive from the region.

On demands to permit traditional cockfighting in coastal areas, the minister countered by asking whether law can be set aside simply because something qualifies as tradition. He questioned if customs alone justify bypassing enacted legislation.

Wild Boar Attacks Forest Worker During Tiger Census

UPPINANGADY

A forest worker engaged in the tiger population survey suffered injuries after a wild boar charged at him in the Muguru section under Uppinangady range on Monday morning.

The second phase of the nationwide All India Tiger Estimation has commenced, and the incident occurred on the very first day of fieldwork in this zone.

Daily-wage employee Sheshappa became the victim when the boar attacked him while he was carrying out census duties.The initial phase of the survey ran from January 5.

Field teams have faced multiple difficulties throughout, including staff shortages, lack of adequate life-protection gear, risks posed by thick forest terrain, and absence of reliable communication equipment—all posing serious challenges to safe and effective operations.

Currently, the second-phase survey covers 18 locations within the Uppinangady range forest area. Range Forest Officer Raghavendra H.P. stated that all personnel received comprehensive precautionary training prior to deployment to minimise risks during the exercise.

QUICK READ

Man dies in birthday crash near Bengaluru

BENGALURU

A 24-year-old man was killed in a tragic road accident while returning home after celebrating his birthday with friends. The victim, identified as Pawan, a resident of Thotada Guddadahalli in Bengaluru North, died in a head-on collision between his motorcycle and an Ashok Leyland goods vehicle near Hivarakandapura around 5:45 p.m. Police said both vehicles were allegedly speeding when the crash occurred under the Soladevanahalli traffic police limits. Pawan died on the spot. His body was shifted to Victoria Hospital for post-mortem examination.

Man kills wife over suspicion in Bengaluru

BENGALURU

A 65-year-old man allegedly hacked his wife to death with a machete after suspecting her character in a shocking incident in the city. The victim, Devika (55), was attacked around 12.45 a.m. while she was asleep at their residence. Police said the accused, Kumar, struck her on the neck following repeated arguments over suspicions about her interactions with others. The couple had recently returned from a pilgrimage to Sabarimala, during which Kumar reportedly grew suspicious after seeing his wife speak to a driver. After the attack, Kumar attempted suicide but was stopped by their children. A case has been registered at Govindarajanagar police station, and Kumar has been arrested.

Ashoka seeks clarification over alleged B'deshi residents

Opposition leader R. Ashoka urges Congress government's response after fresh claims surface

BENGALURU

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka demanded a clarification from the Congress government, alleging that individuals residing at Kogilu Cross have been proven to be Bangladeshi nationals.

Addressing reporters in the city, Ashoka said that during his earlier visit to Kogilu Cross, it was established that the occupants were from Bangladesh. He accused the Congress government of initially dismissing the Bharatiya Janata Party's claims and proceeding to announce housing benefits for the residents.

"At that time, the government, listening to Rahul Gandhi, declared that houses would be provided to everyone there. The Housing Minister even went a step further and promised homes. Now it has been revealed that they are frauds," Ashoka alleged.

He further claimed that Congress leaders had accused the BJP of making baseless allegations, but recent developments had vindicated his party's stand. Ashoka also alleged that the housing announcement was aimed at consolidating minority votes ahead of elections in Kerala.

The BJP leader asserted that if his party had not raised the issue, land worth ₹300 crore would have been allotted to "Bangladeshi residents." "The BJP's fight has succeeded. Now the Chief Minister and other Congress leaders must clarify their earlier statements," he said, referring to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Ashoka also levelled fresh allegations related to the alleged ₹3,000 crore MUDA scam, claiming that an official who had assisted the Congress had been rewarded with a prominent post to stall the investigation.

Responding earlier, Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan had stated that, according to available information, there were no Bangladeshis in Kogilu Layout. He said houses would be allotted only after thorough verification of documents and strictly to eligible residents of Karnataka.

The controversy has sparked a political exchange, with the opposition pressing for transparency and the government maintaining that due process is being followed.

High Court seeks govt reply on cabinet-rank posts for MLAs

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has directed the State government to clarify its stand on a public interest litigation challenging the grant of cabinet-rank status to 34 MLAs appointed as chairpersons of various corporations and boards, along with eight other legislators given similar status in different posts.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C.M. Poonacha issued notice to the government while hearing the petition and adjourned the matter to March 4.

The PIL was filed by Bengaluru resident Suri Payala, who contended that the appointments violate constitutional provisions. The petition argues that under Article 164(1A) of the Constitution, the size of the Council of Ministers in a State cannot exceed 15% of the total strength of the Legislative Assembly. In Karnataka's 224-member Assembly, this would cap the number of ministers at 34. At present, there are 33 ministers, including the Chief Minister.

However, the petitioner contends that 34 MLAs have additionally been appointed as heads of corporations and boards and granted cabinet rank, along with salaries, allowances and other facilities. Eight more MLAs have been appointed to posts such as Delhi Special Representative and Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, also with cabinet status.

While the petition does not object to MLAs being appointed to such bodies, it challenges the conferment of cabinet rank and associated benefits, arguing that this effectively expands the size of the executive in violation of constitutional limits.

The plea also raises concerns under Article 191, which deals with disqualification on grounds of holding an "office of profit." It contends that these posts carry financial benefits — including enhanced pay, official vehicles, fuel, drivers, housing allowances and medical reimbursements — thereby constituting offices of profit that could attract disqualification. The petitioner has sought quashing of government notifications issued on January 26, 2024, appointing 34 MLAs as corporation board presidents, as well as subsequent notifications conferring cabinet-rank status on eight others, and has requested that the appointments be declared unconstitutional.

Stray dog adoptions rise after welfare drive, says GBA

BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has reported a rise in stray dog adoptions following intensified welfare and awareness initiatives across the city.

Under a structured adoption programme implemented in coordination with the city's municipal corporations, several street dogs have found permanent homes in recent weeks, officials said. In a recent instance, 20 stray dogs within the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru North City Municipal Corporation were formally adopted by a resident, Sujaya Jagadish.

According to officials, such adoptions are steadily increasing, reflecting growing public awareness about responsible pet ownership and humane methods of population control. The drive is being carried out strictly in accordance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023.

Before being handed over to adopters, every dog undergoes mandatory sterilisation under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme, anti-rabies vaccination (ARV), administration of combined vaccines, comprehensive health screening and tagging for identification.

"This is not just an adoption drive; it is part of a scientific and humane urban animal management strategy," a senior GBA animal husbandry official said. "Our goal is to ensure public safety, prevent uncontrolled breeding and promote animal welfare in a sustainable manner."

The official emphasised that community participation is vital for the long-term success of the initiative. "When citizens adopt Indian street dogs, they directly contribute to humane population control and help reduce street conflicts. Adoption is a responsible civic action that benefits both animals and neighbourhoods," he noted.

Senior veterinary officers and staff from the animal husbandry department were present during recent adoption handovers. Authorities said follow-up monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that adopted dogs receive proper food, shelter and medical care.

Chalavadi Narayanaswamy alleges misuse of govt land

BENGALURU

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy alleged that government land is being illegally allotted for the construction of Congress Bhavans across Karnataka and warned of legal action. Addressing a press conference, he claimed that while the state government has failed to provide houses to the poor and land to the landless, it is facilitating the allotment of public land for party offices. He alleged that in places such as Mudhol, Badami, Chikkaballapur, Tumakuru, Chamarajanagar, Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, civic amenity sites were allotted at throwaway prices in violation of rules. He also questioned the lack of clarity on plot pricing in Hubballi-Dharwad. Narayanaswamy released details purportedly shared by Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh, stating that the sites were sanctioned with Cabinet approval.

Preparations in full swing for GBA polls

BENGALURU

Preparations for the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections are gathering momentum, with the Congress witnessing an overwhelming response from ticket aspirants even as it raises concerns over discrepancies in the voter list. Supreme Court has directed that the GBA elections be conducted by June 30, triggering heightened political activity across parties. Elections are scheduled for 369 wards, and aspirants have begun lining up in large numbers. Within the Congress alone, nearly 1,600 individuals reportedly collected application forms, and about 900 aspirants have formally submitted applications seeking party tickets. The high number of contenders for 369 constituencies is expected to make ticket distribution a challenging exercise for the party leadership. Even as it prepares for the polls, the State Congress has approached the Karnataka State Election Commission seeking rectification of alleged errors in the voter list. DCM personally visited the Commission and urged officials to address loopholes.

SSLC and Second PU exam preparation in full swing in schools, colleges

BENGALURU

Preparations for the SSLC and Second Pre-University (PU) examinations are in full swing across Karnataka, with around nine lakh students set to appear for the SSLC exams and 7.1 lakh for the Second PU examinations this year.

The Second PU examinations will begin on February 28, while the SSLC examinations are scheduled from March 18. For the first time, the Department of School Education and Literacy has announced the result dates in advance, with SSLC results likely on April 24 and Second PU results on April 7.

Addressing the media after a high-level review meeting involving officials from multiple departments, School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa said all arrangements were in place. "We are fully prepared for the examinations. Students should attend the exams with confidence and without stress," he said.

Final admit cards for the Second PU examinations have already been issued, while SSLC admit cards will be released in the first week of March. Webcasting of examinations, introduced in 2024, will continue this year under the supervision of district commissioners to ensure transparency and prevent malpractice.

On examination days, a 200-metre radius around examination centres will be declared a restricted zone. Xerox, cyber and computer centres within this area will remain closed. The minister warned that strict action would be taken against anyone spreading rumours about question paper leaks. "Students are advised to stay away from social media during the examination period," he said.

Exam preparation activities are in full swing in schools, with blueprints, model question papers, question paper banks, previous years' papers with answer keys and centum papers being made available. Parent-teacher meetings are also being held to brief parents about students' academic progress and readiness.

To facilitate smooth travel, students appearing for the examinations will be allowed free bus travel on production of their admit cards. The minister appealed to private bus operators to extend support if required, particularly in the Karavali and Malenadu regions where Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation services are limited. Deputy Commissioners have been instructed to make special travel arrangements for students coming from remote areas.

Addressing concerns over unrecognised schools, the minister said the issue would not arise this year as the deadline for renewal of school recognition has been extended till March 31. Recognition from the previous academic year will be considered for permitting students to appear for the exams.

Cong MLAs' foreign tour amid power tussle sparks speculation

BENGALURU

Amid intense speculation over a possible leadership change and growing factionalism within the Karnataka Congress, a group of party MLAs has embarked on a foreign tour, triggering fresh political calculations.

Around 21 Congress legislators left the city from Kempegowda International Airport for Australia and New Zealand along with their families. While the first batch departed on Tuesday night, another group is scheduled to fly out soon. The legislators are expected to be abroad for about 13 days and return to Bengaluru on March 3. The timing of the trip has drawn attention as it comes amid heightened discussions about internal power struggles and possible leadership reshuffles within the state unit. Though the MLAs have described the visit as a personal tour, political observers are closely watching the development, questioning whether the trip carries any strategic undertones.

For the past week, there had been speculation that some legislators were planning to travel abroad to study animal husbandry practices. The proposal reportedly faced resistance and objections from within the party and elsewhere. Sources indicate that the party high command had also expressed reservations about such an official visit during a politically sensitive period. Following this, several MLAs clarified that their travel would be strictly personal and not linked to any official study tour.

Among those who reportedly left in the first group were MLAs Puttarangashetty, H D Thammaiah, Hampanagouda Badarli, Devendrappa, B M Nagaraj and MLC Vasanth Kumar. Foreign visits by legislators are not unprecedented. In previous governments too, MLAs have travelled abroad as part of legislative or departmental study tours. However, what sets this instance apart is the backdrop of internal rumblings within the party, which has amplified public and political scrutiny.

With factional politics making headlines in recent weeks, the overseas trip has inevitably led to varied interpretations. While supporters insist it is a routine personal visit, critics argue that the optics of such travel during a sensitive political phase could fuel further speculation about alignments and loyalties within the ruling party.

EXCELLENT EFFORT

ALLEN B'luru students achieves 99.99+ Percentile in JEE Main Jan 2026

BENGALURU

National Testing Agency (NTA) has released the result of JEE Main 2026 January session. In the results, three students of ALLEN Bengaluru have scored 99.99+ percentile in JEE Main 2026 January Session results.

Allen Career Institute, Zonal Head, South Zone, Mahesh Yadav, informed that Allen Career Institute Bengaluru has scripted a Landmark triumph in JEE Main 2026 January session results. Three students from ALLEN Bengaluru have scored 99.99+ percentile in JEE Main 2026 January Session results. He announced that Nathan Jais, Sidharth Ramanath and Shiv Mehra from ALLEN Bengaluru have scored impressive score of 99.9954725 percentile, 99.9952667 and 99.9923275 percentile respectively. Nathan has also scored 100 percentile in Physics and Mathematics.

In a remarkable display of academic brilliance and strategic mentoring, 37 students from ALLEN Bengaluru centre have achieved 99.90+ percentile in JEE Main 2026 January session results. This achievement is a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence demonstrated by our students, the steadfast encouragement of parents, and the tireless commitment of our faculty", said Mahesh Yadav.

Nathan Jais

Shiv Mehra

Sidharth Ramanath

ALLEN Bengaluru celebrated the achievement with students, parents and faculty members, marking a proud moment for the city.

On his feat in JEE Main 2026 January Session, Nathan Jais said that, qualifying JEE Main 2026 with a top percentile feels like a dream come true. My journey became structured and focused after joining ALLEN Bengaluru. The disciplined study plan, regular tests, and detailed performance analysis sharpened my concepts. This success is not just mine, it's a reflection of the right mentorship, strategy, and support system I received.

In National results, Nitin Kukreja, CEO of ALLEN Career Institute, stated that ALLEN has once again demonstrated its academic excellence in the results of JEE Main 2026. A total of 12 students across the country have been declared overall 100 percentile scorers, out of which 8 students are from ALLEN's classroom programs. ALLEN Kota classroom student Kabeer Chhillar secured a perfect score of 300 out of 300 along with 100 percentile.

Meanwhile, classroom course students Arnav Gautam, Shubham Kumar, Bhavesh Patra, Anay Jain, Nimy Purohit, and Chiranjib Kar have also achieved 100 percentile scores. Shreyas Mishra from Allen Online recorded & Test series course also achieved 100 percentile score. Maintaining the authenticity and transparency of its results, ALLEN has once again got its results validated by one of the country's leading audit firms, EY India.

QUICK READ

Child Welfare Committee meets twice a week

Chikkaballapur

The Child Welfare Committee is actively supporting children facing challenges such as child marriage, child labour, begging, abuse under POCSO, and nutrition needs. The committee provides rehabilitation and guidance to affected children to ensure their safety and well-being. Meetings are held every Friday and Saturday at the Government Girls' Home, Dream City Layout, B. Biraste, Chikkaballapur, under the supervision of the District Child Protection Unit. Officials said the initiative aims to protect vulnerable children and promote proper upbringing, education, and nourishment, while coordinating with authorities for timely interventions and support services.

Life sentence in Geeta Hundekar murder case

Siddapur

The First Additional District and Sessions Court in Siddapur has sentenced Abhijit Ganapathy Madiwala Kondli to life imprisonment for the murder of Geeta Hundekar. The crime occurred on December 23, 2024, at Basavanagali on Soraba Road. Geeta, a pygmy collector at a private bank, was found dead after the accused allegedly broke into her house and hid inside. Following a complaint, Siddapur police arrested him and filed charges. The court also ordered the convict to pay ₹82,000 as compensation to her family, bringing partial relief to the grieving dependents.

Request for ₹ 5,000 cr Bhadra Project

The project will irrigate 2,25,515 hectares, fill 367 tanks, release 2 TMC water, boosting groundwater and aiding drought-prone farmers

CHITRADURGA

Planning and Statistics Minister D. Sudhakar, along with MLAs T. Raghumurthy and B.G. Govindappa, met Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar in Bengaluru to request allocation of ₹5,000 crore in the 2026–27 budget for the Bhadra Upper River Project. They also urged the urgent release of ₹300 crore for pending works to divert water to Gonur Aqueduct.

The project aims to provide micro-irrigation to 2,25,515 hectares in Chitradurga, Chikkamagaluru, Tumkur, and Davangere districts. It will fill 50% of the capacity of 367 small irrigation tanks and release 2.00 TMC of water to Vani Vilas Sagar, improving groundwater levels and supporting farmers in drought-prone areas.

So far, ₹11,409.55 crore has been spent out of a revised estimate of ₹21,167.93 crore, leaving a funding gap of around ₹10,000 crore. Farmers have protested repeatedly for the project's early completion, highlighting the urgent need for irrigation after decades of struggle.

The Chitradurga branch canal alone will fill 152 lakes, providing water to 3 lakh acres under micro-irrigation. Compensation for land in Abbinahole village has been resolved, and canal construction has started. Experimental water supply up to Gonur Aqueduct is expected by February 2026 to benefit 90 lakes across five taluks.

Minister Sudhakar and district MLAs stressed that delays in fund release are slowing progress. They requested the Deputy Chief Minister to release ₹300 crore immediately so the pending work can be completed on schedule, ensuring timely water supply and support for farmers in central Karnataka.

AIR Bengaluru invites part-time reporter applications

CHITRADURGA

All India Radio's Bengaluru Centre Regional News Department has announced openings for part-time reporters in Raichur and Chitradurga districts. Interested candidates can apply until 28 February 2026.

Applicants should hold a Postgraduate Diploma or Degree in Journalism, Mass Media, or any degree with at least two years of media experience. The age limit is 24 to 50 years as of the last date of submission.

Candidates must reside in the district headquarters where they are applying or within 10 km of the center. Proficiency in computers, word processing, and access to necessary equipment for news collection are required. Experience in electronic media is mandatory.

Applications, along with supporting documents, should be sent to The Deputy Director General (E), Regional News Unit, Akashvani, Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru 560001, either by registered post or in person before the deadline. For details, candidates can call 080 – 22356344.

Ensure Anganwadis work fully for children

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu directed officials to identify and allocate permanent sites for 320 Anganwadis currently running in rented buildings in the district within one month. He presided over the Unified District Level Committee Meeting at the District Collector's Office Hall on Wednesday and reviewed the progress of Anganwadi operations.

He stressed that all 2,014 Anganwadis must function fully to support the development of children and women. Tehsildars, Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, and Urban Local Body Chiefs were instructed to provide accurate information on rented Anganwadis and complete site allocations promptly. Attendance, discipline, and punctuality are mandatory, along with proper daily distribution of nutritious food. The "Poshan Track" software should be managed efficiently to monitor food and health programs.

Currently, 20 Anganwadi worker and 129 assistant posts are vacant. These positions must be filled within three months to ensure

Prabhu directed all 2,014 Anganwadis to function fully, ensure discipline, accurate data on rented centers, timely site allocation, nutritious meals, and efficient Poshan Track monitoring

smooth operations. Health check-ups for children are mandatory, including vision screening and surgeries for those in need. Glasses and medical treatments should be provided promptly, in coordination with the Health and Education Departments.

Deputy Commissioner Prabhu also instructed officials to ensure effective delivery of schemes like Grihalakshmi Yojana, Sukanya Samvriddhi Yojana, Bhagyalakshmi Yojana, Matru Vandana Yojana, and Poshan Abhiyan. Measures to prevent child marriage, control POCSO cases, and strengthen internal grievance redressal committees for women were emphasized. Continuous monitoring of health scanning centers and strict legal action against non-compliant centers was mandated.

The meeting was attended by District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar, Deputy Directors of School Education and Women & Child Development Departments, officials from Swadhara, Santwana, Sakhi centers, and representatives of NGOs working in women's and child welfare.

Muniswamy alleged Congress denied justice to B. R. Ambedkar, questioning why Gandhi's post-Independence dissolution suggestion wasn't implemented

Muniswamy targets Priyank in leadership row

KOLAR

Former MP S. Muniswamy accused IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge of trying to gain political mileage from the ongoing leadership tussle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar.

Speaking at a press meet at the city's Journalists' House, Muniswamy alleged that Priyank was attacking the RSS and BJP while targeting "Italian Madam" and Rahul Gandhi in an attempt to strengthen his position to become Chief Minister.

He said Priyank had been facing criticism in recent days and was diverting attention by blaming others. Muniswamy questioned how many IT and BT companies had been brought to the state during Priyank's tenure and challenged him to present a clear report of his achievements. Otherwise, he warned, BJP leaders would visit Chittapur and reveal the development record of his family members.

Muniswamy also said Congress leaders had failed to deliver justice to B. R. Ambedkar. He recalled that Mahatma Gandhi had suggested dissolving the Congress after Independence and asked why it was not done.

He demanded that Priyank apologise for his remarks about the RSS. He further alleged that senior leader Mallikarjun Kharge had not contributed to Kalaburagi's growth despite decades in power.

Muniswamy claimed law and order had worsened in Kalaburagi, with drug, betting and sand mafias growing unchecked. Several BJP leaders were present.

MLA Sends Back Excess Garbage Trucks

DODDABALLAPURA

Tension rose in Doddaballapura taluk after local MLA Dheeraj Muniraju stopped several garbage trucks near Doddamankanal village on Wednesday. The action came after reports that more waste than permitted was being dumped at the MSGP garbage disposal unit.

For the past 13 years, garbage from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike has been brought to the MSGP unit. The project had promised scientific waste processing, but villagers say it has turned into a large dumping ground. Over time, heaps of waste have grown like small hills. Residents claim that air, water, and soil in nearby villages have been badly affected. Many locals have been protesting and demanding the unit's closure.

As per rules, only 75 lorries are allowed to dump waste daily. However, the MLA said he received information that extra trucks were being sent to the site. He stopped the vehicles midway and ordered them to return.

Speaking to the media, Muniraju said a road blockade protest was taking place in Mahadevapura, and some trucks were reportedly diverted to Doddaballapura. He said officials are already struggling to manage around 70 lorries a day and cannot allow more. He also pointed out that some vehicles lacked proper documents and had not paid taxes. The matter has been reported to the Transport Department, and such vehicles are being seized.

The MLA said the fight against the MSGP unit has continued for three years and will go on until a permanent solution is found.

Vokkaliga community invited to apply for subsidy

CHITRADURGA

The Karnataka Vokkaliga Communities Development Corporation has announced that online applications are open for subsidy support under the Aahar Vahini (Food Kiosk) Scheme for the year 2025-26. Interested candidates must submit their applications by March 6.

The scheme is designed to help renovate mobile food stalls and four-wheeled electric goods vehicles. Beneficiaries will receive a subsidy of Rs. 3 lakh from the corporation, with the remaining amount available as a loan from banks or financial institutions. This initiative aims to support entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities among Vokkaliga community members.

Eligible applicants include people from the Vokkaliga, Vakkaliga, Sarpa Vokkaliga, Hallikar Vokkaliga, Namdhari Vokkaliga, Gangadkar Vokkaliga, Das Vokkaliga, Reddy Vokkaliga, Marasu Vokkaliga, Gowda, Hallikar, Kunchitiga, Kapu, Heggade, Kamma, Reddy Gounder, Namdhari Gowda, and Uppini Kulaga/Uttama Kulaga communities listed under backward class category 3A. Applicants must reside in the Chitradurga urban assembly constituency, have an annual family income of up to Rs. 3 lakh, and be aged between 21 and 45 years.

Applicants should have a bank account linked to Aadhaar, and the name on the Aadhaar card should match other official documents, including caste and income certificates.

Applications can be submitted online through the Seva Sindhu portal, Grama One, Bangalore One, or Karnataka One centers.

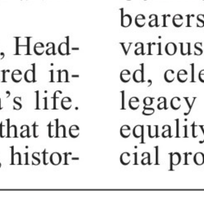
For more information, applicants can visit the Karnataka Vokkaliga Community Development Corporation website at https://kvcdc.karnataka.gov.in/kn/ or contact the office of the District Manager, D. Devaraja Urs Backward Classes Development Corporation, as stated by District Manager Rajagopal.

Land to Be Allotted for 320 Anganwadis in One Month

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu has directed officials to identify and allot land within one month for 320 Anganwadis currently operating from rented buildings in the district. Chairing the Integrated District Level Committee Meeting, he stressed that all 2,014 Anganwadis must function effectively and at full capacity.

Officials were instructed to submit consolidated data within two days on Anganwadis functioning in rented buildings and issue written directions to Tahsildars, Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers, and Urban Local Body heads to complete land identification on time. Attendance must not be marked for absent children, and discipline and punctuality must be maintained. Senior officers were told to monitor daily distribution of nutritious food and ensure proper use of the Poshan Track software.



Of the total Anganwadis, 20 Worker posts and 129 Helper posts are vacant. These must be filled within three months. Benefits meant for children and pregnant women should reach them effectively.

Health check-ups for children in Anganwadis and government schools were made mandatory. Vision screening, distribution of spectacles, and necessary surgeries must be ensured through coordination between the Health, Education, and Women and Child Development Departments.

Officials were also told to strengthen implementation of welfare schemes for women and children, form a district-level committee to prevent workplace harassment, and ensure Internal Complaints Committees function effectively. Awareness programs to curb POCSO cases and child marriages must be conducted across 27 hoblies, along with strict monitoring of scanning centers.

Fire erupts at Belagavi transformer manufacturing plant

BELAGAVI

A fire broke out on Wednesday at the transformer unit of the Hukkeri Power Co-operative Society in Hukkeri town, Belagavi district, causing significant damage. Several transformers inside the plant were completely destroyed, resulting in losses worth lakhs of rupees. Locals quickly alerted the fire brigade, whose prompt response brought the fire under control and prevented damage to nearby buildings. Hukkeri police officials visited the site to inspect the damage and collect details about the incident.

Authorities suspect that a short circuit or a technical malfunction may have caused the blaze, though the exact cause is yet to be confirmed. A formal case has been registered at the local police station, and investigations are ongoing.

The swift action of the fire brigade and local residents is being appreciated, as their efforts prevented the fire from spreading and causing further destruction.

TRIBUTE TO MACHAYYA

Sharans teach equality through action and words

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu said those who achieve equality in their actions and words while working for society's progress are true Sharans, and Madiwala Machayya is the foremost among them. He spoke at the inauguration of the "Madiwala Machidevara Jayanti" program held at the District Kannada Bhavan on Wednesday, organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Kannada and Culture Department. Floral tributes were paid to Machidevara's portrait.

Machayya, a 12th-century social reformer, emphasized knowledge as the key to societal progress. His teachings on equality, brotherhood, gender justice, and secularism influenced principles that are part of today's Constitution. Deputy Commissioner Prabhu noted that despite legal systems, full equality is still not achieved, and Machayya's efforts to build a fair society remain relevant. He urged children of all communities to focus on education and intelligence to achieve excellence, especially in the era of artificial intelligence.

During the program, Headmaster Devaraju shared insights on Machideva's life. Officials emphasized that the Madiwala community, historically underprivileged, should receive government jobs and hostels to support students. Students from the community were honored with Pratibha Puraskar awards for their achievements.

The event began with a grand procession from Ambedkar Bhavan to District Kannada Bhavan, featuring folk art performances and flower palanquins. Community leaders, office bearers, and officers from various departments attended, celebrating Machayya's legacy and his message of equality, education, and social progress.

QUICK READ

Applications open for disabled urban workers posts

Mandya

Applications are invited for eligible disabled persons to fill vacant posts of Urban Rehabilitation Workers in Bellur Town Panchayat under the Rural Rehabilitation Scheme for Disabled Persons. Candidates aged 18 to 45, whether SSLC passed or failed, residing within Bellur Town Panchayat limits, can collect application forms from Bhagyamma Vividdodesh Rehabilitation Workers (In-charge) at the Taluk Panchayat, Nagamangal. Completed applications with supporting documents must be submitted by March 5. For further details, applicants can contact the District Disabled and Senior Citizen Welfare Officer at 7411254522 or 08232-239234. The scheme provides monthly honorarium to selected candidates.

Renukamma Devi Jatra: Nude Ritual Service Prohibited by Authorities

Shivamogga

The Chandragutti village will host the Sri Renukamma Devi Jatra on February 24 and 25. To maintain law and order, District Magistrate Prabhulinga Kavalikatti has banned naked service and certain rituals, including religious bathing in the Varada river, offering Mudi, and filling the padligi, under Section 35 of the Karnataka Police Act, 1963. Officials clarified that the order does not affect chariot processions, worship functions, or other traditional rituals of Sri Renukamma Devi. The directive aims to ensure safety and peaceful conduct of the festival for all devotees.

Anti-drug committees mandatory in educational institutions

The Deputy Commissioner urged strict action against drug transport and ganja cultivation, directing coordinated enforcement and strengthened forest monitoring

KOPPAL

Deputy Commissioner Suresh B. Itnal has directed officials to form anti-drug committees in all schools, colleges and universities across Koppal district. He issued the instruction while chairing the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) meeting at the District Collectorate Hall on Wednesday. He said awareness is the strongest weapon against addiction and students must be educated about the harmful effects of drugs. Marathons and public awareness drives should be organized under the Drug-Free Campaign to spread the message widely.

Dr. Itnal also instructed health officials to keep at least 50 drug detection kits in every district and taluk hospital. The district hospital should have additional kits to handle emergencies.

He questioned the Excise Department about inspections of resorts and warned that strict action must be taken if drugs are found. More cases should be registered wherever necessary. Resorts, roadside eateries, hotels and homestays must be inspected regularly.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed that the transport, sale and use of drugs must be treated seriously. Police, forest, transport and excise officials should act immediately when cases are detected. He also noted complaints about ganja cultivation between regular crops and directed the Forest Department to strengthen field monitoring.

District Superintendent of Police Ram L. Arasiddi and other senior officials from health, education, forest and transport departments attended the meeting and assured cooperation.

Cleanliness and safety key at fairs, warn officials

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Dr. Kumar warned plastics at fairs harm environment and health, pollute soil and water, release toxins, threaten aquatic life, and cause serious illnesses

Authorities have urged the public to maintain cleanliness, safety, and law and order during fairs while promoting awareness about health, education, and social reforms. Fairs, they said, should also discourage superstitions and encourage responsible behavior among visitors.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar highlighted the importance of hygiene during fairs, especially in the summer. Eating outside food under the sun can cause dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, and food poisoning. He advised consuming fruits, buttermilk, lemonade, and water to stay hydrated, while avoiding oily, high-protein, or junk food. Street food, open food, and cut fruits may carry bacterial infections, posing health risks.

Dr. Kumar also warned against the use of plastics in fairs, which harm the environment, animals, and human health. Plastic pollution reduces soil fertility, contaminates water, and releases toxic gases when burned, causing respiratory illnesses. Aquatic life is threatened, while microplastics enter the human food chain. Using hot food containers made of plastic may release harmful chemicals like phthalates and bisphenol-A, leading to cancer, hormonal imbalance, asthma, and neurological issues.

Plastic bags also clog drains, causing floods and spreading epidemics during rains. Authorities recommended cloth or paper bags as eco-friendly alternatives. Dr. Kumar emphasized that banning plastic and promoting sustainable materials is everyone's responsibility to create a healthy environment.

For further guidance, citizens can contact the nearest government hospital or the free health helpline 104.

Missing Boy: Appeal for Information

BALLARI

A 15-year-old boy named Yamanurappa, resident of Ward No. 1, Tekkalakote in Siruguppa Taluk, has been reported missing since February 17. He had left home saying he was going to school but did not return. A case has been registered at Tekkalakote Police Station. The Sub-Inspector of Police has appealed for public assistance in tracing him.

Description: Height 5.1 feet, medium build, wheatish complexion, oval face, speaks Kannada and Telugu. At the time of disappearance, he was wearing a light blue pant and black shirt.

Anyone with information may contact Tekkalakote Police Station PSI at 08396-248013, Mobile: 9480803055, CPI at 08396-248044, Ballari Rural Sub-Division DSP at 08392-276000, or Ballari SP at 08392-258400.

Madivala Machideva Development Corporation: Applications Invited

BALLARI

The Karnataka Madivala Machideva Development Corporation has invited applications through the Seva Sindhu portal for eligible candidates under the Food Vehicle (Food Kiosk) Scheme for the year 2025-26. Under the scheme, portable snack stalls will be set up by modifying four-wheeler EV goods vehicles as required and distributed to beneficiaries. A subsidy of Rs. 3 lakh will be released by the Corporation towards vehicle purchase. The remaining amount may be availed as a loan from banks or financial institutions.

Applicants must belong to Backward Class Category 2A in Ballari Urban Constituency, specifically from the Madivala community and its subcastes such as Agasa, Chakla, Dhobi, Madivala, Mannan, Parith, Rajaka, Sakala, Vannan, Velluthedan, and Sakalavadu. The last date to apply is March 6.

The annual family income must be within Rs. 3,00,000. The applicant's age should be between 21 and 45 years.

Applicants must have an Aadhaar-linked active bank account. The applicant's name as per Aadhaar card (including titles such as Shri/Smt/Kumari etc.) must match with other documents such as caste certificate, income certificate, and bank passbook.

Those who have already availed benefits under any Corporation scheme, as well as their family members, are not eligible to apply again.

For more information, contact the District Manager, Karnataka Madivala Machideva Development Corporation (Ltd.), District Administrative Building, B Block, 2nd Floor, Room No. 53, Anantapur Road, Ballari, or phone: 08392-267038, according to District Manager Bhavikatte.

Illegal Sandalwood Transportation: Two Arrested

BALLARI

Forest officials of Sandur North and South ranges conducted a joint operation and arrested two persons on Monday for illegally transporting sandalwood.

The arrested accused are Lokesh Naik and Kiran Kumar H.K., residents of Sushilanagar village. A total of 110 kg of sandalwood pieces and a Mahindra Morazzo vehicle used for transportation have been seized.

With the cooperation of the Forest, Revenue, and Police Departments of Andhra Pradesh, a raid was conducted at M/s Nishat Fragrance Factory located at Rolla village in Sri Sathya Sai district, Andhra Pradesh. Approximately 179 kg of illegally stored sandalwood was seized from the factory and handed over to the Penukonda FRO.

The successful operation was carried out under the guidance of Dr. K.N. Basavaraj, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Ballari Division, and ACF Sharan Kumar.

The operation was led by Sandur North RFO B.S. Manjunath and Sandur South RFO Syed Dada Kalandar. DRFOs Tippeswamy, Mahesh, Honnuraswamy, Sridhar, and Beat Forester Raghavendra, along with staff members, were part of the team.

A three-day operation was conducted, and so far cases have been registered against a total of seven accused. Investigation is in progress, stated Dr. K.N. Basavaraj in a press release.

Pancha Guarantee conference draws huge crowds

GADAG

A district-level conference on the state government's Pancha Guarantee schemes attracted large crowds at Swami Vivekananda Sabha Bhavan on Wednesday. The event was inaugurated by H. K. Patil, Gadag district in-charge minister, who opened stalls showcasing various welfare programmes.

H. M. Revanna, S. R. Patil and C. N. Sridhar were among the dignitaries present. The conference helped create public awareness and strengthen implementation of the schemes across the district.

Doctor who served villages for decades

NAREGAL

In a time when rural areas had very few medical facilities, Gajanana Krishnarao Kale chose to dedicate his life to the health of villagers. For over four decades, he has served people in and around Naregal in Gadag district with commitment and compassion.

Born on February 22, 1950, in Naregal, he was inspired by his parents, especially his father Dr. Krishnarao Kale, who practiced medicine locally. After completing his MBBS from Mahadevappa Rampure Medical College in Kalaburagi, he returned to serve his hometown. In 1978, he started a small hospital, travelling by bus to Hubballi to bring medicines. Over time, his clinic grew into a well-equipped hospital, upgraded with modern facilities in 2011.

Known for his humane approach, Dr. Kale built close bonds with patients. He offered not only treatment but also emotional support. His honesty and dedication earned him deep respect across rural communities.

Apart from medicine, he briefly entered public life in 1985 and contributed to local development, including housing plots for the poor and school infrastructure. He later stepped away from politics but remained active in social and religious service.

He also supported education through Annadaneshwar Educational Institution, helping a small school grow to over 800 students.

On his 75th birth anniversary, family and well-wishers will honor him with a special program, celebrating a life devoted to service and humanity.

Chikkaballapur distributes Anganwadi appointments, benefits

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The Chikkaballapur District Administration, in coordination with the Zilla Panchayat and Women and Child Development Department, will distribute appointment orders and departmental benefits to newly appointed Anganwadi workers and helpers on 19 February at 10 am at Kannada Bhavan. The program will be inaugurated by Higher Education and District In-charge Minister Dr. M.C. Sudhakar.

The event will be chaired by MLA P.E. Pradeep Eshwar and attended by Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi R. Hebbalkar, MPs Dr. K. Sudhakar and M. Mallesh Babu, and other dignitaries including MLAs S.N. Subbareddy, B.N. Ravikumar, and K.H. Puttaswamy Gowda. Heads of state corporations, departmental secretaries, and officials from various government departments will also participate.

The program aims to formally welcome the new Anganwadi staff, provide them with essential benefits, and strengthen the district's efforts in early childhood development. Local representatives, office bearers, and citizens are expected to attend in large numbers.

CH CLASSIFIEDS To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

IN THE COURT OF HONOURABLE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT, HOSUR
I.A..No.1/2025 in O.S.49/2025

Petitioners/Plaintiffs
1. Prabhakar Reddy. 2. Umadevi
3. Renuka. 4. Suresh
babu
Vs
Respondents/Defendants No.4 to 16
1. Akkaiyamma
2. Sarojamma
3. Hemavathi
4. Neelamma W/o Balakrishna
5. Lingarathna
6. Harsha Yadav
7. Bheemaraju
8. Lingaraju
9. Sathyanarayana
10. Rajalakshmi
11. Pushpalatha
12. Anand
13. Manjunath

All are children's of Late.B.N.Ramaiah, hindu, aged about 60 years, residing at Door No: 17/2, S.K. Lane, Mavalli, (Shanubhga Krishnappa Layout), Bangalore Karnataka state 560004.

NOTICE

Please take notice that the above petitioner/plaintiff have filed a Suit before the Honorable Additonal District sessions Judge at Hosur praying for Partition and for other reliefs against you, as Respondent/Defendant. The above suit is posted to 01.04.2026. You are hereby called upon to appear by person or with the help of the pleader and file the objections if any before the Honorable Court on the said date at about 10.00 A.M., and state your objections, failing which, the court may proceed to pass adverse orders against you, which may note.

// By Order of the Court //
S. BALAJI., B.Com, M.A., LLB., ADVOCATE & NOTARY PUBLIC HOSUR-635 109.

NAME CHANGE
I, **ZAKIR ALI MOHAMED HAKIM ZAN**, S/o Mohamed Hakim Zan, resident of No E 11/3, 1st Cross, Chinnappa Layout, Near Kanti Sweets, Kamanahalli, Bengaluru-560084, have changed my name to **MOHAMMED ZAKEER ALI**, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE
I, **HAJIRA KHATOON**, W/o. Rahamathali Khan, Resident of No. 84/2, 8th Main Road, 3rd Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru -560011, Karnataka, have changed my name to **HAJIRA KHANAM**, vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE
I, **LAKSHMI VEERABRAHMAIAH**, W/o. Late Veera Brahmaiah, Resident of Flat No. 314, B Block, D S Max Sista Nest, Banashankari 5th Stage, Bengaluru -560061, Karnataka, have changed my name to **M LAKSHMI**, vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE
I, **RAGASHREE BALASUBRAMANYA**, W/o. Balasubramanya Brahma, Resident of No. 967, Dhwani 2nd Block, Sir M Vishweshwaraiah Layout, Kengeri, Bengaluru -560060, Karnataka, have changed my name to **RAGASHREE BHAT**, vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SHANKAR ASHOK SHINDE S/o NANESH K THANKUR, R/o No-154/5, Muskaan Residency, 1st A Main, 8th Block, Kormangala, VI Block, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560095, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SHANKAR THACKUR.

NAME CHANGE
I, **AFSARI PARVEEN**, resident of Samads Naaz Heritage, Flat No TF 302, 3rd Floor, HBR Layout, 1" Stage, 3" Block, Bengaluru-560043, have changed my name to **APSARI PARVEEN**, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE
I, **HASINA BANU**, aged 58 years wife of Shoukath pasha Residing at no 3554, vp Bore , Hunsur town Mysore district 571105 Karnataka, Have changed my name to **HASEENA BHANU**(my new name)Vide affidavit date 14/2/2026 before notary H. Dinesh Hunsur.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, MRINALINI BARUAH D/o NRIPEN DUTTA BARUAH, R/o No 904, 3rd A Cross, 1st Block, HRBR Layout, Kalyananagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560043, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MRINALINI BARRUAH.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SANJANA F JAIN D/o FULCHAND D JAIN, W/o DARSHAN MAHENDRAKUMAR BAFNA, R/o 12/13, 2nd Floor, S K Lane, Kumbarapet, Bangalore North, Bagalore City, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560002, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BHAVNA DARSHAN BAFNA.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Raghu, MY Original registered sale deed dated 04-10-2004 in respect of the property bearing Sy No.681/1 measuring 0.15 guntas and Sy No.678/1 measuring 0.14 guntas and SY No.677/1 measuring 0.05 guntas alienation order No.ALNCR:245/2002-03, out of this measuring East to West 28 feet and North to South 29 feet property site No.12 the said property situated at Maddur Village, Maddur Taluk, Mandya District as document No.MDR-1-03223-2004-05, CD No.MDRD9, was lost on dated 18-02-2026 in Maddur in this connection filed the complaint before the consent Police Station in this connection endorsement issued on 18-02-2026 if any one trace please intimates me or said Police within 7 days.
By M.Guruprasad, Advocate, No.2, M.Lingaiah Building, V.V.Road, Mandya-571401. Mob:9242221603.

NAME CHANGE
I, **AYSHA MAHJABEEN**, W/o Asif Pasha, resident of No 428, Noorani Masjid Road, Ilyas Nagar, JP Nagar, Bengaluru-560078, have changed my name to **AYSHA MEHJABEEN M**, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE
I, **ASIF PASHA AMEER BASHA**, S/o Ameer Pasha, resident of No 428, Noorani Masjid Road, Ilyas Nagar, JP Nagar, Bengaluru-560078, have changed my name to **ASIF PASHA**, vide affidavit dated: 18.02.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, DEEPAK MOHANKA S/o GOVIND MOHANKA R/o Flat No A-2101, Candeur Signature, Varthur Gunjur Main Road, Gunjur Village, Varthur, Gunjur, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560087, have changed the name of my minor son HARSH MOHANKA aged 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as TANUJ MOHANKA.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, VENKATAMMA W/o VENKATESHAPPA, R/o 64, Dyavasandra, Jigani, Anekal, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560105, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHINNAVENKATAMMA.

Vaishnaw: Action taken over Chinese robotic dog row

NEW DELHI

Amid escalating controversy over a Chinese robotic dog being projected as an Indian innovation at the AI Summit expo, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said that immediate action had been taken against any wrongdoing at the exhibition. The issue erupted after a Noida-based university showcased a Chinese-made robodog named 'Orion', allegedly presenting it as a domestic technological breakthrough.

Addressing the media, Vaishnaw stated that while the Artificial Intelligence exhibition featured many noteworthy and innovative solutions, any act of misconduct had been dealt with promptly. In the Artificial Intelligence exhibition, many good solutions have been presented. If anyone has done wrong, immediate action has been taken against the wrongdoing. However, one should look at other good AI solutions also, he said, urging observers not to overlook the broader achievements of the event. The university at the centre of the controversy dismissed the allegations as

an exaggeration and misinterpretation, asserting that its efforts were aligned with the government's broader mission and vision for AI-led growth. However, the incident quickly gained political traction, providing the Opposition with ammunition to criticise the government's handling of the summit.

The Indian National Congress accused the government of squandering a significant opportunity to showcase India as a global hub for AI innovation. The party alleged that the episode had embarrassed the country on the international stage. Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi intensified the attack, describing the summit as a disorganised PR spectacle. He claimed that instead of leveraging India's talent and vast data resources, the event ended up promoting Chinese products while failing to highlight indigenous capabilities.

MP Budget sets ₹4.38 trillion outlay

BHOPAL

Jagdish Devda on Wednesday presented a Rs 4.38 lakh crore budget for 2026-27 in the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, outlining a balanced roadmap that combines social welfare with infrastructure expansion and industrial growth.

The budget places special emphasis on women, farmers and marginalised communities while proposing significant investments in education, policing, rural development and sustainable energy.

The flagship Ladli Behna Yojana received the largest allocation of Rs 23,882 crore, reaffirming the government's commitment to direct financial assistance for women and household economic stability. The budget also announced recruitment of 15,000 teachers to strengthen the education system and 22,500 personnel in the police department to bolster law enforcement.

The flagship Ladli Behna Yojana received largest allocation of Rs 23,882 crore, reaffirming govt's commitment to direct financial aid for women and household economic stability

In agriculture, Devda unveiled plans to distribute subsidised solar irrigation pumps to one lakh farmers, fulfilling Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's push for renewable energy adoption in farming. The move is expected to reduce electricity costs and improve productivity. Additionally, a target of Rs 25,000 crore in Kisan loans has been set, alongside efforts to promote natural farming practices.

Over 1 lakh casual, daily wagers in J&K await regularisation

JAMMU

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday informed the Legislative Assembly that more than one lakh daily wagers and casual labourers are currently engaged across various government departments in Jammu and Kashmir.

He assured members that the government is adopting a legally sustainable and financially prudent approach towards their regularisation.

In a written reply to a clubbed question raised by 15 legislators from both treasury and opposition benches, Abdullah said that 1,00,501 workers have been registered through an online Aadhaar-based biometric identification and skill profiling system. The registered workforce comprises 69,696 casual labourers, 8,836 daily rated workers, 8,534 seasonal labourers, 5,757 food and civil supplies helpers, 2,153 part-time sweepers and 1,929 individuals engaged through the hospital development fund.

Department-wise, the highest number — 38,585 workers — is employed in the Public Health Engineering and Irrigation & Flood Control Department. This is followed by Power Development with 13,616 workers, Education with 12,646, Forest with 8,317 and Public Works (R&B) with 6,801. Significant numbers are also engaged in Health and Medical Education (4,868), Agriculture (4,776), Animal and Sheep Husbandry (2,170), and Housing and Urban Development (1,702), among others.

Regionally, of the 57,390 registered workers in the Kashmir division, Srinagar accounts for 11,825 — the highest in the division — followed by Anantnag (8,823), Baramulla (7,724), Budgam (5,772), Kupwara (5,547), Ganderbal (4,056), Kulgam (3,321) and Bandipora (2,771). In the Jammu division, which has 40,077 registered workers, Jammu district tops with 13,425 workers, followed by Rajouri (5,191), Doda (3,856), Kathua (3,451), Reasi (3,210), Kishtwar (2,754), Udhampur (2,518), Poonch (2,455), Samba (1,722) and Ramban (1,495).

Water Resource Department
(Minor Irrigation)

Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Division, Admin Block, NH-75 Road, Near Café Coffee Day, Narsapura-563133, Kolar taluk & District. E-Mail: eemidklr@rediffmail.com, eemigwddkolar@gmail.com, Landline No: 08152-200049

No:EE/MI/Kol/TA/AE/Tender Notification/2429/2025-26/ Dtd:21.01.2026

Short term tender notification no: 25/2025-26 / Dtd:21.01.2026

On behalf of Governor of Karnataka Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Division, Kolar has invited tenders for eligible bidders through KPP-Procurement for the work in two cover system for the 02 number of work. The tender procedure as per Rule of KTPP Act and standard tender document KW-4 shall be followed for Maximum amount of Rs. 200.00 Lakhs & Minimum amount of Rs. 150 Lakhs. Scheduled EMD amount to be submitted through KPP-Portal and tender processing fees as per KPP-Portal procedure. Downloading tender documents through KPP-Portal **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** starts from **Dt:13.02.2026 04:30 PM.** Last date of uploading tender documents upto **Dt:27.02.2026 04:30 PM. Pre bid meeting Date:20.02.2026 @11:30 AM at Office of the Executive Engineer MI & GWD division, Kolar.** Opening of technical bid **Dt:02.03.2026 @ 11:30 PM.** The Executive Engineer reserves the right to make any changes in above details in future if needed. For more details can be obtained from the office of the under signed on all working days during office hours and also through **website: www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without giving any reason.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water, Development Division, Kolar.

DIPR/KOLAR/RO:501/KSMCA/2025-26

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Smt.Rathnamma W/o. Raju D**. residing at # 9, 9th Main 4th Cross, Near Muneshwara Temple Papaiah Garden, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560085. My clients have owned the property by through Registered Gift deed Document No.BSG-1-09778-2023-24, dated: 24-01-2024, now my clint availing loan from Piramal Finance Ltd, if any person/persons objecting for the proposed purchase or having any rights, title and interest over the schedule property may forward their objections or claims to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents within **seven (07)** days from the date of this publication. if there were to be no response to this notice within the time stipulated, my client will proceed with the Loan Piramal Finance Ltd. Any response after the expiry of the stipulated time, the same will be ignored.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Property No 9A, Ward No. 165, Assessment No.17,Katha No. 24/2, situated at Katharaguppe village,Utharahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore, Built on site measuring East to west : 40 feet and North to South: 15 feet Totally 600 Sq feet, and bounded on **East By :** Siddareddy's Property, **West By :** Road, **North By :** Property No. 8, **South By :** Site No.9B Balance property.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI, Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to public at large **Mr.Sunil S/o. Thimmarayappa,** Residing at #36, Haldenahalli,Besthamanahalli Post,Anekal, Bangalore,Karnataka - 562106. He has lost the Registered Original Sale Deed of Doc No.4409/1994-95 dated on 06-02-1995 and Registered Original Sale Deed of Doc No. ANK-1-11936/2004-05 dated on 17-09-2004 he has lost at Near Anekal bus stop Accordingly he has lodged the complainant on Bangalore City Police with E-Lost dated 18/02/2026 Report No.2069488/2026.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.8, Municipal Assessment Sl No.91/922/8, E-Katha No.4975371651, Ward No.8, Situated at Anekal Town, Anekal Taluk, Measuring 9.15×16.20+ 12.65/2, in all measuring 1418 Sq, ft bounded on **East by:** Hiduvali Property, **West by:** Road, **North by:** Site No.7, **South by:** Site No.9. If anyone finding the aforesaid document is hereby requested to handover the same to our office at the address mentioned hereunder.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI, Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Civil Engineering Division, Tumakur.

No : KST/EE/TK/JE/766/2025-26 **Date : 18.02.2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION- 18,19,20,21/2025-26

Item wise tenders are being invited for the following works on a two cover system through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal mode from registered KPWD /CPWD/MES Contractors Intrested & eligible Civil/Electrical contractors are requested submit their tenders to the E Governance centre or **http//kppp.karnataka.gov.in**,can participate the tender on **20.02.2026** onwards. Any changes/amendments will be published on kpp portal only. No separate notification will be issued in this regard.

Sl. no	Name of the work	Amount put to tender (in Lakhs) (Excluding GST & L/s Provision)	E.M.D (in Rs.)	Last Date & Time for submission Tender
1	Engaging workers for daily electricity and water supply maintenance for duration of One Year at Devaraju Urs Bus Stand, Tumakur.	8.13	20,350.00	02-03-2026 Time:16.00hrs (Short Term)
2	Providing Effluent Treatment Plant in Depots at Chitradurga, Challakere, Pavagada, Hiriyur, Holalkere and Molakalmuru. (2nd Call).	118.58	2,00,000.00	02-03-2026 Time:16.00hrs (Short Term)
3	Renovation of Canteen at KSRTC Bus Stand Hiriyuru.	6.87	17,200.00	09-03-2026 Time:16.00hrs
4	Construction of a temporary painting shed at the Chitradurga divisional workshop.	19.99	50,000.00	09-03-2026 Time:16.00hrs

More details can be obtained from the Office of The Executive Engineer, KSRTC, Civil Division, Tumakur old Bus Stop, Tumakur. during working hours on all working days.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer KSRTC CE Division Tumakuru.

DIPR/CP/5728/Zen/2025-26

Govt. of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Chamarajanagara-571313

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.37/2025-26/ DATED: 17-02-2026 (Two Cover System)

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, **Chamarajanagara** invites tender in co-ordination with e-procurement portal platform, Bangalore. Tender format as per **KW-4** through e- procurement under the Head of Account **Education Department** for **Chamarajanagara** Taluk. Date of application submission for tender document and submission of filled tender through online **Date: 18-02-2026 to 24-03-2026 upto 16.00 hours**. Last date for clarifications/queries on tender **Date: 27-02-2026 upto 16.00 Hours**. date of opening of technical bid of the tender **Date: 26-03-2026 after 17.00 hours**. After the approval of Technical bid the Financial Bid will be opened. Tender Form Fee: As per e-procurement Details as belows.

SL No.	Name of work	Estimate Cost (Rs. in Lakhs)	Approximate Value of work (Rs.in lakhs)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs)	Contractor Eligibility
01	ಕೊಳ್ಳೇಗಾಲ ಎಂ.ಜಿ.ಎಸ್.ವಿ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ ಕಾಲೇಜು ಕೊಠಡಿ ದುರಸ್ತಿ ಮತ್ತು ನವೀಕರಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ	125.00	-	2,00,000.00	Class - II & above

For more details visit website: **htpp://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Chamarajangara (**Ph: 08226-223019**) during office hours.

AE Phone No: 8073339806
No: DIPR: CHANAGAR: 723:2025-26

Executive Engineer
PRED Division,
Chamarajangara

Government of Karnataka
BENGALURU URBAN ZILLA PANCHAYAT
Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, First Floor, Zilla Panchayat Building, S. Kariyappa Road, Banashankari (Near Banashankari Temple) Bengaluru-560070.

No: EE/RDW & SD/BNG(U)/TND/9/2025-26 DATED 16.02.2026

Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Tender Notice (Short Term)

Tenders are invited through Karnataka Public procurement portal for the Goods approved Under Support Activity Head of grants for the year 2025-26 Under Two Cover System. The Tender Documents can be obtained and submitted on or before **23.02.2026** up to **4.00 PM**. For further details contact the above address during office hours or visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Rural Drinking Water & Sanitation Division,
Bengaluru Urban Dist, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/Shirdi Sai/5718/2025-26

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Zone-1, Sarvagnanagara Division, 9th 'C' Main, HRBR Layout, 1st Block, Kalyananagara, Bengaluru - 560043.

No: EE/SGN/KPPP/TEND/14/2025-26 Date: 18-02-2026

NOTICE INVITING SHORT TERM TENDER (NIT)
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Executive Engineer (Sarvagnanagara Division), BNCC, Zone-1, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in Greater Bengaluru Authority or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organization for the Construction of Works detailed below.

(Standard Tender Document - KW-1 & KW-2)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
1	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 76, Hennur for the year 2025-26. **(CAT-I) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 30,000/-**
2	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 77, Nagawara for the year 2025-26. **(SC) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 30,000/-**
3	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 78, HBR Layout for the year 2025-26. **(CAT-II(A)) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 30,000/-**
4	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 79, Kadugondanahalli for the year 2025-26. **(ST) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 30,000/-**
5	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 80, Kacharakanahalli for the year 2025-26. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 60,000/-**
6	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 81, Kammanahalli for the year 2025-26. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 60,000/-**
7	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 82, Banasawadi for the year 2025-26. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 60,000/-**
8	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 83, Subbayyanapalya for the year 2025-26. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 60,000/-**
9	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 84, Lingarajapura for the year 2025-26. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 60,000/-**
10	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 85, Maruthisevanagara for the year 2025-26. **(SC) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 30,000/-**
11	Repair and Maintenance of BBMP Building in Sarvagnanagara Constituency in East Zone. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 28.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 56,000/-**
12	Repair and Maintenance of BBMP Community Halls in Sarvagnanagara Constituency in East Zone. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 10.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 25,000/-**
13	Providing Rain Water Harvesting in BBMP Buildings and Parks in Sarvagnanagara Constituency in East Zone. **(Others) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 8.50, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 21,250/-**
14	Maintenance and Repair of Crematoriums / Burial Ground in Sarvagnanagara Constituency in East Zone. **(CAT-II(A)) - Approximated Amount of Work (Rs. in Lakhs): 10.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 10,000/-**

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 21-02-2026. 2)** Pre Bid Meeting will be held on **25-02-2026 at 3.00 PM in the Office of the Executive Engineer, BDA Building, 9th 'C' Main Road, HRBR Layout, 1st Block, Banasawadi, Bengaluru. 3)** Last Date for Uploading the Filled Tender Document is **04-03-2026 upto 4.00 PM. 4)** Date of Opening of Tenders on **05-03-2026 at 4.30 PM (If possible or next Working Day).** Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Sarvagnanagara Division, Zone-1, BNCC.

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179

Regd Office: 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherppu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 | **Phone No.:** 0487-3520504, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount	Date of Possession
1	Basavanta Nemappa Lamani, Sheela Basvant Lamani, Maruti Demanna Kulumakar, **/NHL00260034811/** Hubli	All That Part & Parcel of The Property Bearing Gram Panchayath No. 1088,Measuring 158.86 Sq Mtrs., Bearing E-Property No. 152701100300120549, Kiravatti Village, Tq: Yallapur Dist: Uttar Kannada, Karnataka, Pin: 581412. East-House of Dadapir, West-Govt. Road, South-House of Rameeza Shaik, North-House of P Tangappa	07-11-2025 & Rs.453460/-	14-02-2026
2	Zafrulla B, Kushnuda Banu, Bhasheer Sab, Parveen Bi, **/NHL00510029975/** Shimoga	Property No 75/A, E- Property No. 152400100900800082, Measuring Total 132.85 Sq. Meter, Sidlipura Village, Bhadravati Taluk, Shimoga, Karnataka, Pin: 577227. East-Property of Seenappa, West-Property of Pyaru, South-Road, North-Road	07-11-2025 & Rs.478234/-	14-02-2026
3	Mallappa Shankareppa Iti, Madevi Shankarappa Iti, Yallappa Dandin, **/NHL01370039819/** Vijayapura	Property No: 1196/1, Measuring Total 1474 Sq. Ft., Ukkali Village, Tq: Basavan Bagewadi, Dist: Vijayapur, Karnataka, Pin: 586102. East-Road, West-Shankareppa Iti, South-Road, North-Property of Ramabai Iti	07-11-2025 & Rs.236824/-	14-02-2026
4	Chandramma, Nanjashetti, **/MLAP0034041817/** Mysore	Property No: 256, Pl.D. No. 152100102300100310, Chawdenahalli Village, Chawdenahalli Gram Panchayath, K R Pete Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka, Pin: 571423. Totally 111.48 Square Meters. East-Land Belongs To Sunanda, West-Road, South-Conservancy And House Belongs To Varalakshmi, North-Property Belongs To Ashoka	07-11-2025 & Rs.419885/-	14-02-2026
5	Kamalamma, Shivanna, Mahadeva, **/MHL00340043625/** Mysore	Property No- 109 Pl.D. No. 152200623070020014, Hasuvinakavalu Village, Chikkanerale Gp, Periyapatna Thaluk, Mysore District, Karnataka, Pin: 571102. Admeasuring 148.59 Sq. Mts. East-Gramatana, West-House of Rajamma, South-Road, North-Gamatana Vacant Place	07-11-2025 & Rs.373121/-	14-02-2026
6	Bhargavi B C, Shivananda N N, Sharadhamma N, Lakshmama N, **/NHL00910026171/** Hassan	Property Bearing No. 151600502800520189, Gram Panchayat D No. 358, Property Id No. 358, Survey No.96/9, Nambihalli (V), Noranakki Gate Gramapanchayath, Chanrayapattana(T), Hassan (D), Karnataka, Pin: 573116. Totally Measuring 123.93 Square Meters. East-Conservancy, West-Own Property, South-Road, North-Own Property	07-11-2025 & Rs.1014826/-	14-02-2026
7	Shivanna A, Rathnamma, Munimarakka, **/MLAP0092047494/** Vinayanagar Ramnagara	Property No. 225/250, Pl.D. No. 152900400701520498, Kodiyalakarenahalli Village, Byramangala Gramapanchayath, Ramanagara Taluk And District, Karnataka, Pin: 562109. Totally 55.74 Square Meters. East-Passage, West-Property Belongs To Hombaiah, South-Road, North-Property Belongs To Anjappa	07-11-2025 & Rs.574096/-	14-02-2026
8	Manjunatha A, Annaiah Kunnamalegowda, Prathibha H R, **/MO90LALONS 00000506486/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property No. 304 /5/1, Pl.D. No. 152200419117020442, Situated At Kadakola Grama, Kadakola Gramapanchayat, Mysore Block, Mysore (D), Measuring: East To West: 8.8392 Meter & North To South: 16.1544 Meter. Karnataka, Pin: 571311. East-Property of Rachamma & Kempamma, West-House of Kempamma., South-Property of Marigowda, North-Road	08-11-2025 & Rs.455852/-	14-02-2026
9	Hanumanthaiah G, Harshith B H, Pushpa K, Rakshith B H, **/NHL00920002136/** Vinayanagar Ramnagara	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 704/475, Pl.D. No. 152900100500220035 Situated At Bhoohalli Village, Bhoohalli Grama Panchayath, Channapatna Taluk And Ramanagara Dist., Measuring East To West 7.62 Mtr And North To South 7.62 Mtr In Karnataka, Pin: 562138. East-Remaining Property And Govt. Road, West-Remaining Property And Govt. Road, South-Remaining Property And Property of Shivanna, North-Remaining Property And Property of Jayamma	08-11-2025 & Rs.646716/-	14-02-2026
10	Ravishankar K, Kalegowda B, Sarojamma S, **/NHL00340005784/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Attahalli Gramapanchayathi Property No. 139 And As Per Form No. 11 B Unique No. 152200700907020130 Situated At Kanchanahalli Village, T. Narasipura Taluk, Within The Jurisdiction Of Attahalli Gramapanchayathi Measuring East To West: 8.68 Meters And North To South: 17.67 Meters Karnataka, Pin: 571101. East-Property of Bettamma, West- Property of Nagaraju, South- Property of Devaraju, North-Road	08-11-2025 & Rs.623375/-	14-02-2026
11	Mahendra C G, Jayamma T, Uma G, **/NLAP0092007364/** Vinayanagar Ramnagara	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.138/34/A, Pl.D. No. 152900301600200138, Situated At Chandurayanahalli Village, Kalya Grama Panchayath, Magadi Taluk And Ramanagara District, Measuring East To West 7.62 Meters And North To South 6.096 Meters Total 46.45 Square Meter And Consisting of Building Having Built Up Area of 46.45 Square Meter Karnataka, Pin: 562120. East-Street, West-Property Belong To Narasingarao, South-Road, North- House Belongs To Venkatanarasamma.	08-11-2025 & Rs.498906/-	14-02-2026
12	Shivakumara L, Lakshmamma L, Lakshmiha L, **/NHL00900014257/** Vivekananda Circle	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Gavadagere Gramapanchayathi Property No. 834/812 And As Per Form No. 9 And 11 A Unique No. 152200200317400962 Situated At Gavadagere Village, Hunasuru Taluk, Within The Jurisdiction of Gavadagere Gramapanchayathi Measuring East To West: 10.06 Meters And North To South: 5.48 Meters, Karnataka, Pin: 571610. East-Road, West-House of Mahadeva, South- Vacant Site of Devamma, North- House of Kadaraiah	08-11-2025 & Rs.499397/-	14-02-2026
13	Siddarajaswamy M, Sakamma V, Mahesha Chikka Rangashetty, **/NHL00340014298/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.109, Pid No.152200540047000223, Situated At Haginavalu Village, Haginavalu Grama Panchayath, Nanjanagud Taluk, Mysuru District, Measuring East To West 4.2672 Meters And North To South 15.24 Meters, Totally 65.03 Square Meters Karnataka, Pin: 571315. East-Gurumalleshwara Mutt. , West- House Belongs To H.M. Madappa., South-Site Belongs To Siddarajamma, North-Drainagae	08-11-2025 & Rs.323546/-	14-02-2026
14	Chethan H N, Susheela S, Nagaraju H N, Chandan H N, **/NHL00340020219/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 299. Pl.D. No.152100600200820114, Situated At Hosakote Grama, Halebidu Gramapanchayat, Pandavapura Block, Mandya (D). Measuring: E-W: 7.9248 Meter & N-S: 15.24 Meter. Admeasuring: 120.77 Sq Mts. Karnataka, Pin: 571434. East-Galli & House of Rathnamma, West-Galli & House of Swamygowda, South-Beedi, North-Property of Mylari Papanna	10-11-2025 & Rs.690192/-	14-02-2026
15	Shivaraju M, Nagamma M, Shivakumara R, **/NHL00340024149/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel Of The Property Bearing No. 221/220, Pl.D No.152200502600300265, Situated At Goluru Grama, Devarasanahalli Gramapanchayat, Nanjangud Block, Mysore (D). Measuring: E-W: 9.144 Meter & N-S: 12.192 Meter. Admeasuring: 111.48 Sq Mts. Karnataka, Pin:571312. East-Site of Rathnamma, West-Road, South-Own Property, North-Site of Swamy	10-11-2025 & Rs.516236/-	14-02-2026
16	Ningamma N, Ninganna M, **/MHL00340025035/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Banduru Gramapanchayathi Property No. 9/6/1 And As Per Form No. 11 B Unique No. 152100304300720069 Situated At Sasiyalapura Village, Malavalli Taluk, Mandya District, Within The Jurisdiction of Banduru Gramapanchayathi Measuring East To West: 15.54 Meters And North To South: 17.07 Meters, Totally Measuring 265.46 Square Meters And Building Measuring 110.63 Square Meters. Karnataka, Pin: 571430. East-House of Shivanna Son of Late. Halligowda, West- House of Ningamma Wife of K. Madaiah, South-Village Road, North-Revenue Land	10-11-2025 & Rs.358237/-	14-02-2026
17	Usha V, Sanjay Nayak R, **/MHL00340027699/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 241, Block-02, Situated At Block-02, Gururu Kollapaluru, Ramabayinagara, Mysore City & Mysore (D). Measuring: E-W: 20.00 Feet & N-S: 30.00 Feet. Karnataka,Pin:570008. East-Site No. 240, West-Site No. 242, South-Site No. 262, North-Road	10-11-2025 & Rs.419471/-	14-02-2026
18	Harisha P, Asha R, Puttaraju A, **/NHL00340030013/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 71, Pl.D No.152100502401000076, Situated At Kumbarakoppalu Grama, Godenahalli Gramapanchayat, Nagamangala Block, Mandya (D). Measuring: E-W: 5.48640 Meter & N-S: 7.01040 Meter Admeasuring 38.46 Sq. Mts. Karnataka, Pin: 571418. East-Galli & Site of Shanthamma, West-Galli & House of Lalithamma, South-Beedi, North-Galli & House of Jayamma	10-11-2025 & Rs.486305/-	14-02-2026
19	Ramesha, Manjula, Shanthaiah, **/NHL00910045319/** Hassan	All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing No. 151600403200620033, Gram Panchayath Property No. 313, And Property Situated At Nagenahalli Village, Hunuganahalli Gram Panchayath, Belur Taluk, Hassan District Measuring East To West 8.5344 And North To South 6.7056000000000004, Totally Measuring 57.22 Square Meters And Constricted Plinth Area 57.22SquareMetersKarnataka,Pin:573115.East-Road, West-Government, South-House Property of Sri. Shanthaiah, North-House Property of Sri. Sannaiah	10-11-2025 & Rs.313236/-	14-02-2026
20	Radha Krishna, Sakamma, Arpitha, **/NHL00340044285/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 343/295, Pl.D No.152200602510200351, Situated At Benagalu Grama, Channakal Kavalu Gramapanchayat, Periyapatna Block, Mysore (D). Measuring: E-W: 8.00 Meter & N-S: 8.00 Meter Admeasuring: 64.00 Sq Mts. Karnataka, Pin: 571102. East-Government Road, West-Vacant Site of Boraiah, South-Site of Thammaiah, North-House of Kempamma	10-11-2025 & Rs.239799/-	14-02-2026
21	Vishwanatha G R, Kaalamma U Sannamma, Lakshmamma, **/NHL00910046457/** Hassan	All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing Property Id No. 151600504101300231, Gram Panchayath Khatha No. 177, Survey No. 211/3A3a5 And Property Situated At Gowdagere Village, Gowdagere Gram Panchayath, Channarayapattana Taluk, Hassan District Measuring East To West: 8.2296 Meters And North To South: 9.144 Meters Andconstructed Plinth Area 75.25 Square Meters Karnataka, Pin: 573116. East-Conservancy And House Property of Sri. Kumar, West-House Property of Sri. Dharmegowda, South-Property of Sri. Thopegowda., North-Own Property of Sri. Manjegowda	10-11-2025 & Rs.399582/-	14-02-2026
22	Aishwarya K C, Mahadeva M, **/MLAP0034011069/** Mysore	Property No. 47/48.1/2, Unique No. 150800300400400066, Hosa Hamapura Village, Harale Gp, Kollegala Block, Chamarajnagar District, Karnataka, Pin: 571440 Admeasuring 294.32 Sq. Mts.. East-Road, West-House of Dundanayaka, South-House of Chowdanayaka, North-Road	14-11-2025 & Rs.378439/-	14-02-2026
23	Hanumakka Halavagal, Basavaraj Hanumanthappa Halavagal, Hanumanthappa Bhimappa Halavagal, Shekharappa B Halavagal, Nirmalavva Hanumanthappa Halavagal, **/MHL00480010762/** Davangare	Village Panchayath No. 746, E-Swathu No. 151700501300320754, Measuring 160.51 Sq. Mtrs., House Constructed Measuring 43.71 Sq. Mtrs., Aremallapura Village, Ranibennur Taluk, Haveri, Karnataka, Pin: 581115. East-Property of Chowdappa Halavagal, West-Property of Channabasappa Nagarajji, South-Government Road, North-Property of Hanumanthappa H Talavar	15-11-2025 & Rs.285799/-	14-02-2026

Date: 19th February 2026 | Place: KARNATAKA **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

QUICK READ

Mini gun factory busted in Bihar's Bhagalpur, five arrested

Patna

In a joint operation, the Kolkata Police STF, Bihar STF and Madhusudanpur Police Station have unearthed an active illegal improvised firearms manufacturing unit in Rahamatbagh village in Bihar's Bhagalpur district. The raid was conducted at the residence of Md. Nasir Ansari, son of Md. Gaju Salahuddin Ansari. The accused had been operating the illegal arms unit on the ground floor of his house under the guise of a spinning mill. During the operation, five people, including one co-owner and four skilled arms manufacturers, were arrested.

Pandemonium in Odisha assembly over paddy procurement issue

Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Assembly on Wednesday witnessed a massive uproar from members of both the opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Congress over alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement across the state. As soon as the proceedings commenced, BJD members holding banners reached near Speaker Surama Padhy's podium and began raising anti-government slogans over the chaos at mandis in the state. In a unique form of protest, some BJD legislators placed paddy and paddy bags on the reporters' table inside the House. Congress members also raised anti-government slogans inside the House over issues concerning farmers.

India shows robust optimism, trust for AI unlike West: Sunak

New Delhi

When it comes to AI, India shows robust optimism and trust, while Western countries are anxious about the emerging technology, former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Wednesday. Sunak cautioned that bridging this gap requires targeted governance efforts. I think closing that confidence gap is as much a policy task as it is a technical one, he said during a fireside chat with Meta's Chief AI Officer Alexandr Wang at the ongoing 'India AI Impact Summit 2026' here. Across the world, we're seeing different attitudes towards AI. In countries like India, there's enormous optimism and trust, and in Western countries, we're seeing that anxiety is still the dominant feeling towards AI, he told the gathering.

Assam rolls out school provincialisation portal

The PMS portal will streamline, monitor and process applications from non-provincialised venture schools and colleges, along with their teaching and non-teaching staff

GUWAHATI

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday launched the Provincialisation Management System (PMS) portal, describing it as a decisive and transparent initiative to resolve the long-pending issue of provincialisation of venture educational institutions and their staff.

The digital platform was unveiled at Lok Sewa Bhawan as part of the government's broader governance reform and welfare agenda.

The PMS portal will streamline, monitor and process applications from non-provincialised venture schools and colleges, along with their teaching and non-teaching employees, under the Assam Education (Provincialisation of Services of Teachers and Re-Organisation of Educational Institutions) Act, 2017, amended in 2025. The Chief Minister said the system establishes a centralised database of venture institutions and associated manpower, aiming to eliminate ambiguity and alleged irregularities that have historically affected the provincialisation process.

Recalling his tenure as Education Minister, Sarma highlighted that more than 50,000 teachers across primary, secondary and collegiate levels have been provincialised in phases since 2011 under the BJP-led government. He described the PMS rollout as the third and most comprehensive phase, covering venture LP, UP/ME, high schools, higher secondary schools and degree colleges.

In a politically significant move, Sarma acknowledged that not all applicants may meet eligibility norms. To address this, the government has introduced a 'Gurudakshina' scheme in the Vote-on-Account Budget presented on February 17, offering a financial package to those whose services cannot be provincialised. Additionally, a preferential marking system will be implemented to help such individuals compete for other government positions.

The Chief Minister clarified that only institutions established before January 1, 2006, would qualify. Applicants must provide recognition certificates, land records, academic performance data and staff credentials. He urged all stakeholders to cooperate, reiterating the government's commitment to safeguarding the future of venture institution employees while ensuring adherence to legal and administrative standards.

Federalism needs a structural reset: Stalin

CHENNAI

Chief Minister MK Stalin on Wednesday tabled Part I of the report of the High-Level Committee on Union–State Relations in the state Assembly, reiterating the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government's long-standing demand for greater state autonomy and a strengthened federal framework.

He described the move as a historic step towards redefining Centre–State relations.

The committee, chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph, with former bureaucrats K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty and M. Naganathan as members, recently submitted its findings to the Chief Minister. Presenting the report in the House, Stalin said the initiative seeks to ensure that state governments are vested with necessary constitutional powers. Today is the day we take the initiative to amend the Constitution to ensure that state governments are vested with all necessary powers. If we cannot do it, who else can? he asked, drawing strong support from ruling party legislators.

Stalin alleged that the BJP-led Union government was centralising authority and exercising power in an autocratic manner, compelling states to depend excessively on the Centre. He argued that several subjects originally under the State List were being shifted to the Concurrent List, thereby diluting constitutional provisions meant to safeguard state rights.

In a pointed remark, the Chief Minister said, To put it simply, we have now belled the cat, signalling what he termed a bold attempt to address long-standing federal concerns. He also expressed dissatisfaction over fiscal devolution, claiming that economically developed states were receiving a reduced share of central funds despite contributing significantly to national revenue.

Calling for bipartisan support across the country, Stalin urged political parties to adopt state autonomy as a guiding principle. He emphasised that a balanced federal structure would enable all languages, cultures and communities to flourish with dignity while preserving the spirit of cooperative federalism enshrined in the Constitution.

MLCs protest after students barred from exam over late arrival

PATNA

Proceedings of the Bihar Legislative Council began on Wednesday amid strong protests by members over students being denied entry to the board examination centres due to late arrival.

Raising the issue in the House, opposition members questioned the government's handling of the situation.

MLC Sanjeev Kumar Singh said that students should not be barred from appearing in examinations if they arrive late due to transportation or traffic-related problems. He stressed that the Bihar School Examination Board must take into account the psychological impact on students who prepare for years for the matriculation examination but are denied entry at the last moment.

This is a serious matter of concern and needs immediate attention, he said. Participating in the discussion, BJP MLC Nawal Kishor Yadav pointed out that students are often sent from one place to another without clear information. He said neither students nor their families can anticipate where traffic congestion may occur.

Despite arrangements, traffic jams are unavoidable in many areas.

Hyderabad targets to achieve net zero by 2034: CM Reddy

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Wednesday that Hyderabad aims to achieve Net Zero by 2034 and will soon undertake a city-wide carbon footprint audit. He also announced that within the next five years, there will be almost no industry or factory within the urban area.

Speaking at the Mumbai Climate Week, the Chief Minister outlined Telangana's long-term development vision, linking economic growth with environmental sustainability.

According to Chief Minister's Office (CMO) here, he reiterated Telangana's ambition to grow from a 200-billion-dollar state GDP to a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2034 and a three-trillion-dollar economy by 2047.

He described Telangana's strategic framework structured into three zones - CURE, PURE, and RARE.

Hyderabad has been declared the Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) within the 160-kilometer Outer Ring Road. The PURE Zone, located between the Outer Ring Road and the 360-kilometer Regional Ring Road, has been dedicated to manufacturing and positioned as a major hub powered by green energy, aimed at providing a China +1 alternative. he said.

Referring to the combined impact of Covid and climate change, the Chief Minister stated that both have changed the approach of governments, describing the present situation as a climate emergency. He emphasised that growth, investments, and job creation must continue alongside sustainability.

He stated that in Hyderabad, taxes on electric vehicles have been removed, resulting in high EV adoption, while discussions are underway with EV firms for manufacturing investments.

Over 200,000 auto-rickshaws are being retrofitted toward green alternatives, over 3,500 RTC buses are being replaced with electric buses, and the Hyderabad Metro is being expanded from 71 kilometers to over 200 kilometers. Industries are being progressively shifted from the core urban region to peri-urban zones. Emphasising that power or energy is the real currency of any economy, the Chief Minister said development is measured by power generation and consumption.

RS biennial polls: Mahayuti set to win six seats, one by MVA

MUMBAI

The Election Commission of India on Wednesday announced the schedule for the biennial elections to 37 vacant Rajya Sabha seats, which includes seven from Maharashtra. The ruling coalition, Mahayuti, is set to secure six seats, whereas the Maha Vikas Aghadi is expected to obtain one seat, reflecting their respective strengths in the state Assembly. The polling is scheduled for March 16, and the deadline for filing nominations is from February 26 to March 5. The seven Rajya Sabha members from Maharashtra whose terms are set to expire on April 2 are Sharad Pawar, Fauzia Khan (NCP-SP), Dr Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad, Dhairyasheel Patil (BJP), Ramdas Athawale (RPI chief), Priyanka Vikram Chaturvedi (Shiv Sena UBT) and Rajani Patil (Congress).

Haryana clears Rs 402cr solar-powered micro irrigation projects

CHANDIGARH

In a significant step towards sustainable agriculture and scientific water management, the State-Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC), chaired by Haryana Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi, on Wednesday approved four community-based solar-powered integrated micro irrigation projects under the Micro Irrigation and Command Area Development Authority (MICADA).

With a total outlay of Rs 402.41 crore, the projects will be implemented across 61 canal outlets spanning 20 blocks in Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Kurukshetra and Mahendragarh districts. The initiative is scheduled for completion between 2026–27 and 2028–29 and aims to bring 11,040 hectares of culturable command area under advanced micro-irrigation systems. Nearly 8,926 farmers across 94 villages are expected to benefit from the scheme.

District-wise allocation includes Rs 95.78 crore for Bhiwani, Rs 114.68 crore for Jhajjar, Rs 77.17 crore for Kurukshetra and Rs 114.78 crore for Mahendragarh. Officials said the targeted investment reflects a strategic focus on strengthening irrigation infrastructure in water-stressed regions of the state. The projects have a benefit-cost ratio ranging from 1.21:1 to 1.65:1, underscoring their economic viability and long-term gains through improved water efficiency and enhanced crop productivity.

By promoting drip and sprinkler irrigation systems within canal command areas, the initiative seeks to reduce transmission and distribution losses, optimise water utilisation and boost agricultural output. Chairing the meeting, Rastogi emphasised the importance of integrating supply-side and demand-side water management strategies to tackle climate variability, declining groundwater levels and rising agricultural water demand.

He directed concerned departments to ensure strict monitoring, timely implementation and effective inter-departmental coordination so that benefits reach farmers within the stipulated timeframe. The adoption of solar-powered systems, he noted, will reduce dependence on conventional energy sources, lower operational costs for farmers and promote environmentally sustainable irrigation practices aligned with clean energy objectives.

Mamata announces UN FAO recognition for 'Matir Srishti'

KOLKATA

Mamata Banerjee announced that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has awarded an international certificate to West Bengal's 'Matir Srishti' programme. Launched in 2020 in the dry Paschimanchal districts, the initiative integrates land development, irrigation expansion, and panchayat-level implementation to transform barren, mono-crop land into fertile, multi-crop fields. It supports horticulture and vegetable cultivation while creating ponds and new water bodies to strengthen irrigation infrastructure. The programme has generated lakhs of livelihood opportunities and significantly increased rural family incomes. Banerjee also said the FAO recognised Bengal's famed Gobindbhog, Tulaipanji, and Kanakchur aromatic rice as food and cultural heritage. She termed the recognition a prestigious global honour and dedicated it to the state's rural communities and hardworking farmers.

Legally barred from leaving UK: Vijay Mallya to Bombay HC

MUMBAI

UK-based businessman Vijay Mallya on Wednesday informed the Bombay High Court that he is not in a position to specify when he would return to India. He cited restrictions imposed by courts in England that he said prevented him from leaving the country.

The matter was heard by a Bench comprising Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad, in connection with two petitions filed by Mallya. One petition challenges his designation as a Fugitive Economic Offender under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), while the other contests a court order formally declaring him a fugitive.

Senior advocate Amit Desai, appearing for Mallya, referred to Supreme Court judgments where writ petitions were heard even in the absence of petitioners. He submitted that extradition proceedings against Mallya are ongoing in the UK and that his client is aware of them but is unable to leave English jurisdiction due to binding court orders.

The Chief Justice, however, questioned Mallya's intent to appear before the court, observing that he appeared to be relying on UK court orders without clarifying whether those orders had been challenged. The Bench indicated that such reliance could not be treated as a blanket justification.

The court directed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to file a response to Mallya's affidavit. It also asked Desai to submit a detailed affidavit placing on record all statements made during the hearing so that the Union of India could respond accordingly.

Granting three weeks' time for further proceedings, the Bench noted that the petitions have been pending since 2019 and remarked that no sincere efforts appeared to have been made for their early disposal. The matter is now scheduled for a hearing on March 11.

According to the Finance Ministry, Mallya -- former promoter of Kingfisher Airlines -- is among 15 individuals declared Fugitive Economic Offenders as of October 31, 2025, allegedly causing losses of thousands of crores of rupees to Indian banks.

Earlier, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) submitted before the court that Mallya had filed affidavits disputing banks' claims and was attempting to turn money laundering proceedings into recovery litigation.

IT'S TIME FOR CORRECTION

Colonial edu system not ideal for nation: Bhagwat

LUCKNOW

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday said Western colonial powers had tampered with India's traditional education system to serve their administrative interests, replacing it with a framework designed to produce a class of intermediaries.

Addressing a research scholars' dialogue programme at the Malviya Auditorium of the University of Lucknow, Bhagwat said the British altered India's education structure to create black Englishmen who would cater to colonial governance needs.

He asserted that the distortions inflicted during colonial rule must now be corrected. Stressing that education and healthcare are fundamental necessities, Bhagwat said they should not be treated as commercial enterprises. Education and health must be accessible to all, he remarked, calling for systems that prioritise inclusivity over profit.

> **The British altered India's education structure to create black Englishmen who would cater to colonial governance needs.**
>
> —Mohan Bhagwat, , RSS chief

Bhagwat reiterated that the RSS works toward building a prosperous and united nation focused on social cohesion rather than political power or popularity. He invited critics and scholars to understand the organisation from within instead of forming opinions solely through external narratives. According to him, the core objective of the RSS is to unite Hindu society and strengthen national character.

Highlighting the importance of research, Bhagwat urged scholars to pursue their work with authenticity and dedication to the nation. Truthful facts must be brought to light. Ignorance prevents us from understanding India, he said, alleging that negative propaganda had often shaped perceptions about the Sangh.

He called for objective academic inquiry to counter misinformation.

On globalisation, Bhagwat observed that it has increasingly become associated with commercialisation and materialism, trends he described as harmful. Referring to the Indian philosophical concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — the world as one family — he said India advocates collective well-being rather than consumerism.

He further stated that if India aspires to global leadership, it must be strong across all sectors. The world respects truth only when it is backed by power, he said. Emphasising dharma as an eternal principle guiding life and harmony, Bhagwat also urged citizens to adopt environmentally responsible practices such as tree plantation, water conservation and reducing single-use plastics while embracing sustainable technological development.

QUICK READ

Top officers become entrepreneurs under institutional patronage

Islamabad

Pakistan Army suffered heavy casualties during counterinsurgency operations along the volatile Afghanistan-Pakistan border in the post-9/11 period, battling Al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. It was stated that during the height of these operations, some Pakistani army officers privately expressed dissatisfaction over pay disparities, according to a recent report. The 'India Narrative' report stated that when US officials voiced displeasure over what they described as the Pakistani army's disappointing performance, certain officers complained that insurgent groups were compensating their fighters better than the Pakistani government paid its own soldiers.

Extreme heat pushing Australia's farms, wildlife to limits: Study

Canberra

Australia's record-breaking heatwave in late January, with inland temperatures reaching 50 degrees Celsius, has inflicted severe damage on agriculture and wildlife, scientists warn. Thousands of flying foxes died in the state of South Australia, while mango growers in the state of Western Australia reported fruit boiled on trees, according to an article published on The Conversation website on Wednesday. These increasingly extreme heatwaves now threaten crops, livestock, wildlife and ecosystems, said the article by Owen Atkin, director of the Australian National University (ANU), and ANU ecology professor Adrienne Nicotra, with two co-authors.

India-Nepal sign updated mutual legal assistance agreement

Kathmandu

India and Nepal have signed an updated Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in Kathmandu, enabling the competent authorities of the two countries to cooperate in criminal investigations and legal proceedings. After years of negotiations, the agreement which was initially agreed upon at a home secretary-level meeting in New Delhi in July last year was signed, formalising cooperation to tackle financial and non-financial crimes as well as terrorism.

Russia-Ukraine talks end with no breakthrough

US-mediated peace talks in Switzerland took place as Trump suggested it was up to Ukraine & Zelenskiy to ensure talks were successful

GENEVA

Peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia concluded abruptly in Geneva on Wednesday after lasting only around two hours, casting fresh uncertainty over diplomatic efforts to end the four-year-long conflict. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy described the discussions as difficult and accused Moscow of intentionally delaying progress toward a final agreement.

The talks, mediated by the United States and held in Switzerland, were seen as a renewed attempt to revive stalled diplomatic channels. However, tensions reportedly surfaced early during the first day of negotiations. Writing on X shortly after the session concluded, Zelenskiy stated that Russia appeared to be dragging out discussions that, in his view, could already have reached a concluding phase. His remarks suggested frustration within the Ukrainian delegation over what it perceives as a lack of genuine commitment from Moscow to finalize terms for peace.

SUMMARY

- Zelenskiy criticises US pressure for Ukraine concessions
- Says progress made but positions differ
- Russia says further talks will be held soon

The diplomatic initiative comes amid increasing involvement from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has in recent days indicated that responsibility for the success of the negotiations rests significantly with Ukraine and its leadership. Trump's comments have added a new dimension to the peace process, signaling Washington's expectation that Kyiv take proactive steps to secure an agreement.

Minutes after Zelenskiy's public statement, Russia's state news agency RIA confirmed that the Geneva session had ended. Russia's chief negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky, spoke briefly to reporters in the hotel lobby where the talks were conducted. He stated that further rounds of negotiations would take place soon but did not provide a specific timeline.

A Ukrainian official also confirmed the conclusion of the talks, noting that they lasted approximately two hours. While both sides indicated that dialogue would continue, Wednesday's abrupt ending underscored the fragile and complex nature of the negotiations. With no immediate breakthrough achieved, the path toward ending the prolonged conflict remains uncertain, as diplomatic efforts face mounting challenges and deep-seated mistrust between the two nations.

TRUMP ENVOYS JUGGLE DUAL HIGH-STAKES NEGOTIATIONS

WASHINGTON

Even for a U.S. president long associated with high-profile deal-making, President Donald Trump's decision to assign his trusted envoys to handle two complex international negotiations in a single day has raised eyebrows across diplomatic circles. In Geneva, U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner were tasked with shuttling between discussions on the Iranian nuclear standoff and efforts to advance peace talks related to Russia's war in Ukraine.

The back-to-back diplomatic engagements have left many foreign policy observers questioning whether the administration's representatives may be overstretched. Both negotiations are widely regarded as among the most intricate and politically sensitive issues currently facing Washington. The Iranian nuclear file involves delicate questions about sanctions relief, uranium enrichment limits, and international inspections, while the Ukraine conflict centers on territorial sovereignty, security guarantees, and a fragile ceasefire process.

Experts argue that each crisis alone demands sustained focus, technical expertise, and careful coordination with allies. Attempting to manage both simultaneously, particularly within the tight timeframe of a single day, risks diluting attention and reducing the likelihood of tangible progress. Critics suggest that shuttle diplomacy of this scale requires a broader diplomatic infrastructure rather than reliance on a small circle of trusted aides.

Lagarde may quit ECB early to let Macron shape successor

FRANKFURT

President of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, is reportedly considering leaving her post before the end of her term, according to a report published Wednesday by the Financial Times.

The move, if confirmed, could influence the selection of her successor ahead of France's 2027 presidential election.

Lagarde's current mandate at the Frankfurt-based central bank runs until October 2027. However, concerns have emerged in political and financial circles that a potential victory by France's far-right in the spring 2027 presidential race could complicate the appointment process for the next ECB president. The head of the ECB plays a crucial role in steering monetary policy for the euro zone, making the succession decision highly significant for Europe's economic stability.

As per agencies, which cited a person familiar with the matter, Lagarde has not finalized the timing of any early departure. Nevertheless, she is reportedly keen for outgoing French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to play central roles in determining her successor. Macron, constitutionally barred from seeking a third consecutive term, is expected to leave office in 2027, potentially narrowing the window for his influence over key European appointments.

The prospect of leadership change at the ECB comes at a delicate moment for the euro zone economy, which continues to navigate inflation pressures, interest rate adjustments, and geopolitical uncertainties. Any perception of political maneuvering around the succession process could draw scrutiny from member states and financial markets alike.

Responding to the report, an ECB spokesperson emphasized that no decision has been made. President Lagarde is totally focused on her mission and has not taken any decision regarding the end of her term, the spokesperson said. While the ECB has officially dismissed suggestions of an imminent move, the report has intensified speculation in Brussels and other European capitals about the future leadership of one of the world's most influential central banks.

Ivory Coast weighs Cocoa farm price cut

IVORY COAST

Ivory Coast is considering reducing the guaranteed farm gate price paid to its cocoa farmers in a move that could mirror neighboring Ghana, according to two senior government sources who spoke to Reuters.

The discussions come as the world's largest cocoa-producing nations grapple with a deepening crisis driven by volatile global prices and market uncertainty.

Officials in Abidjan said the government is evaluating all available options as it seeks to stabilize the sector, which forms the backbone of the country's economy and supports millions of livelihoods. Ivory Coast and Ghana together account for more than 60% of global cocoa production, giving their pricing decisions significant influence over the international chocolate supply chain.

Ghana has already moved to reduce its farm gate price by 28.6% for the remainder of the 2025/2026 main crop season. The decision was taken in coordination with Ivorian authorities as both nations respond to sharply falling global cocoa prices. The price cuts are intended to reflect market realities and prevent large-scale smuggling of cocoa beans across borders, which can occur when significant

price disparities exist between the two countries.

The potential adjustment in Ivory Coast underscores the scale of the challenges facing cocoa producers. After a period of record-high prices fueled by supply shortages and adverse weather, markets have seen a steep correction. Governments must now balance protecting farmer incomes with maintaining financial sustainability for state-backed cocoa marketing boards.

Any reduction in the guaranteed price is likely to spark concern among farmers, many of whom are already facing rising input costs and unpredictable weather patterns. However, officials argue that maintaining alignment with Ghana is essential to preserving regional stability in cocoa trade.

As deliberations continue, industry observers say the final decision will have far-reaching implications not only for West African producers but also for global chocolate manufacturers and consumers navigating fluctuating commodity markets.

Iran-US agree on nuke guiding principles

TEHRAN

Iran and the United States have reached an understanding on key guiding principles in renewed talks aimed at resolving their long-running nuclear dispute, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said. However, he emphasized that the breakthrough does not signal that a final agreement is imminent.

Speaking to Iranian media after discussions concluded in Geneva, Araqchi described the negotiations as substantive, noting that multiple proposals had been exchanged and seriously debated. Different ideas have been presented, these ideas have been seriously discussed, ultimately we've been able to reach a general agreement on some guiding principles, he said. Despite this progress, he cautioned that significant work remains before a comprehensive deal can be finalized.

The diplomatic developments had an immediate impact on global energy markets. Oil futures fell following Araqchi's remarks, with the benchmark Brent crude contract dropping more than 1%. The market reaction reflected easing fears of a potential military confrontation in the Middle East, particularly as Washington has deployed additional naval forces to the region in recent weeks to increase pressure on Tehran.

A U.S. official familiar with the negotiations said that while progress had been made, substantial differences persist. The official, who declined to be identified, indicated that Iran is expected to submit detailed proposals within the next two weeks aimed at narrowing remaining gaps in the talks. Progress was made, but there are still a lot of details to discuss, the official stated.

Kremlin denies secret nuclear tests with China

MOSCOW

The Kremlin on Wednesday firmly denied allegations that either Russia or China had conducted secret nuclear tests, dismissing recent accusations from the United States. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that both Moscow and Beijing have refrained from carrying out any undisclosed nuclear detonations.

The remarks came after Washington accused China earlier this month of conducting a covert nuclear test in 2020.

The allegation was made in the context of renewed U.S. calls for a broader arms control agreement that would include not only Russia but also China. The United States has argued that future global security frameworks must incorporate Beijing, given its growing military capabilities and expanding nuclear arsenal.

Responding to the claims, Peskov told reporters that references to supposed secret tests were unfounded. We've heard many references to certain tests.

Both the Russian Federation and China have been mentioned in this regard. Neither the Russian Federation nor China has conducted any nuclear tests, he said.

China has also denied the U.S. accusations, maintaining that it adheres to international obligations concerning nuclear activities. Both Russia and China have historically criticized what they describe as Washington's attempts to reshape arms control mechanisms in ways that serve U.S. strategic interests.

The exchange highlights renewed tensions among major powers over nuclear transparency and arms control.

THE NORDIC CO-OPERATION

Nordic region seeks deeper ties with Greenland

NUUK

Nordic government ministers are set to convene in Denmark on Wednesday to consider granting equal status to Greenland and two other autonomous territories within a key regional forum.

The move comes amid heightened geopolitical tensions following U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed push to assert control over the strategically significant Arctic island.

Denmark, along with its European partners, has firmly rejected Trump's insistence that Copenhagen should transfer Greenland to the United States. In response to the diplomatic friction, talks were initiated last month involving Denmark's capital, Greenland's authorities in Nuuk, and Washington in an effort to defuse tensions and maintain stability in the Arctic region. Wednesday's discussions will center on updating the Helsinki Treaty, originally adopted in 1962 by Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway. The treaty established the framework for political, economic and cultural cooperation among Nordic nations. Proposed revisions would grant full participatory rights to Denmark's autonomous territories of Greenland and Faroe Islands, as well as Finland's self-governing region of Aland.

For decades, these territories have sought equal footing within the Nordic Council framework but have been excluded from high-level meetings addressing security and foreign policy issues, including discussions related to the war in Ukraine. Frustration over this exclusion led Greenland's government in 2024 to boycott certain Nordic cooperation formats, underscoring growing demands for recognition and influence.

Denmark's Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Morten Dahlin, described the potential treaty revision as a landmark development. In a statement, he said modernizing the agreement would represent a historic step and help future-proof Nordic collaboration in a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape.

Observers note that granting equal status could strengthen regional unity at a time when Arctic security and sovereignty have gained increased international attention.

Historical context of Helsinki Treaty

The autonomous regions have for decades sought equal status in the Nordic forum, but were kept out of meetings focusing on security and related matters such as the war in Ukraine, leading Greenland's government in 2024 to boycott the format.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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2	1	6	7	5	4	9	3	8
4	9	3	6	8	2	1	5	7
6	3	5	2	7	9	8	4	1
1	4	7	8	3	6	2	9	5
8	2	9	5	4	1	3	7	6

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

MBAPPE Demands Ban After Alleged Racist Slur at Lisbon Clash

Vinicius incident sparks anti-racism protocol halt during tense playoff

LISBON

Kylian Mbappe has called for Benfica winger Gianluca Prestianni to be banned from the UEFA Champions League following allegations that the Argentine directed a racist slur at Vinicius Junior during Real Madrid's 1-0 win in the playoff first leg.

The incident occurred shortly after Vinicius curled home the decisive goal at the Estadio da Luz. Television footage showed Prestianni covering his mouth with his shirt before making a comment that Vinicius and nearby teammates interpreted as racist. Referee Francois Letexier halted the match for 11 minutes after activating FIFA's anti-racism protocol.

Footage appeared to capture Mbappe confronting Prestianni, angrily calling him "a bloody racist." The atmosphere turned hostile when play resumed, with Vinicius and Mbappe loudly booed by sections of the home crowd. Despite rising tensions, the match concluded without further interruption.

Mbappe said he heard the alleged remark more than once and was ready to walk off the pitch before Vinicius persuaded him to continue. "We cannot accept that there is a player in Europe's top competition who behaves like this. He doesn't deserve to play in the Champions League anymore," Mbappe said. Prestianni denied the accusation in a social media post, insisting Vinicius had misheard him and stating he "was never racist with anyone." He added that he regretted the threats he had received following the incident.

Vinicius later expressed frustration online, writing that "racists are, above all, cowards." The Brazilian has previously been subjected to repeated racist abuse in Spain.

Real Madrid and Benfica will meet again for the second leg at the Santiago Bernabeu next week.

Twins ace López likely out for season with UCL tear

FORT MYERS

Pablo López, the ace right-hander for the Minnesota Twins, is facing a major elbow injury that appears likely to end his 2026 season before it begins. The club announced that López has suffered a "significant tear" in the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) of his right elbow and will probably need reconstructive Tommy John surgery.

General manager Jeremy Zoll told reporters at spring training that López ended a bullpen session early yesterday after experiencing soreness in his throwing elbow, prompting an MRI that revealed the ligament damage. A second medical opinion is expected this week, but the current outlook points to the type of surgery that typically sidelines pitchers for a year or more.

López, who turns 30 on March 7, has been Minnesota's Opening Day starter in each of the past three seasons and was slated to pitch for his native Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic next month. He posted a 5-4 record with a 2.74 ERA over 14 starts last season while battling multiple injuries. "It's definitely a blow," Zoll said, acknowledging the setback for both López and the Twins' rotation depth. Without their most dependable starter, Minnesota will turn to fellow right-hander Joe Ryan as the new ace.

Dembélé limps off as PSG edge Monaco in thriller

MONACO

Ousmane Dembélé's injury troubles resurfaced as he was forced off in the first half of Paris Saint-Germain's dramatic 3-2 victory over AS Monaco in their UEFA Champions League playoff first leg.

Dembélé, who had been doubtful due to a leg problem, lasted just 26 minutes at the Stade Louis II. Television footage showed the Ballon d'Or winner rubbing the back of his left calf before pulling down his sock, raising immediate concerns. He was replaced by Désiré Doué, whose inspired performance turned the game on its head.

Despite trailing 2-0 when Dembélé exited, PSG mounted a spirited comeback. Doué struck twice and played a key role in the equaliser, helping the visitors take a slender advantage into next week's return leg in Paris. Right back Achraf Hakimi also found the net after goalkeeper Philipp Köhn parried Doué's effort into his path.

Coach Luis Enrique insisted no risk was taken in starting Dembélé. "He trained normally. He took a knock in the first 15 minutes and then couldn't run. We'll have to see if there's an injury," he said.

Doué's first goal came moments after Vitinha had his penalty saved, and he later sealed the win with a composed finish from a pass by Warren Zaïre-Emery. Monaco's night worsened when midfielder Aleksandr Golovin was sent off for a clumsy challenge. While PSG celebrated a crucial away win, Dembélé's fitness remains a pressing concern ahead of the decisive second leg.

Woods hints at Masters return, weighs Ryder Cup captaincy

LOS ANGELES

Tiger Woods has opened the door to a possible return at the Masters in April and confirmed he is considering serving as U.S. captain for the 2027 Ryder Cup, even as he continues to battle significant physical setbacks.

Speaking at Riviera Country Club, where he is host of the Genesis Invitational, Woods said he would not rule out competing at Masters Tournament this year.

"I'm trying. Put it that way," said Woods, who recently turned 50. "The disc replacement has been one thing. I've had a fused back and now a disc replacement, so it's challenging."

The 15-time major champion has played sparingly in recent seasons following a 2021 car crash that severely injured his right leg, along with subsequent Achilles and back surgeries.

While he reiterated he would not use a golf cart on the PGA Tour, he acknowledged that competing on the Champions Tour — now that he is eligible — remains an option.

Beyond his playing future, Woods' schedule is increasingly occupied off the course. As chair of the PGA Tour's Future Competitions Committee, he is helping shape a revamped calendar expected to roll out fully by 2028.

Woods also revealed he has been approached about captaining the United States at the Ryder Cup in Ireland in 2027.

"They've asked me for my input," Woods said. "I haven't made my decision yet. I'm trying to figure out if I can do Team USA justice with my time."

Though he is not competing this week at Riviera, Woods said his competitive drive remains intact — and Augusta National is not yet off the table.

CARLOS ALCARAZ battles past Rinderknech to advance in Doha

DOHA

Carlos Alcaraz made a winning return to the tour following his Australian Open triumph, defeating France's Arthur Rinderknech 6-4, 7-6(7/5) in the opening round of the Qatar Open.

The world number one, who recently became the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam with his victory in Melbourne, was pushed hard by the 30th-ranked Rinderknech in a contest that tested his composure. Alcaraz secured the first set with a crucial break in the fifth game but faced stern resistance in the second.

Serving to force a tie-break, the Spaniard had to save two break points before holding firm. In the ensuing tie-break, he produced a stunning forehand winner down the line on match point to seal victory.

"It was really difficult. Arthur is a dangerous player. Nobody wants to face him in the first round," Alcaraz said. "I'm happy that I stayed calm and positive and played great tennis in the key moments."

Alcaraz will next face another Frenchman, 60th-ranked Valentin Royer, as he looks to improve on last year's quarter-final finish in Doha. Elsewhere, Russian star Andrey Rublev advanced with a straight-sets win over Jesper De Jong. Seventh seed Karen Khachanov battled past Shintaro Mochizuki, while Stefanos Tsitsipas set up a clash with 2023 champion Daniil Medvedev.

Alcaraz's chief rival Jannik Sinner sits on the opposite side of the draw, raising the prospect of another blockbuster showdown later in the tournament.

Frostad wins big air gold in Olympic thriller for ages

LIVIGNO, ITALY

Tormod Frostad delivered a groundbreaking performance to win Olympic men's big air gold, edging American Mac Forehand in what athletes called one of the greatest finals ever staged at the 2026 Winter Olympics. Frostad clinched victory by executing a daring and innovative "nose butter" variation on all three of his jumps, finishing with 195.50 points to Forehand's 193.25 in a contest where scores neared the 200-point maximum.

The 23-year-old Norwegian led much of the 12-man final before Forehand surged ahead with a spectacular penultimate jump, flipping the standings and piling pressure onto Frostad's final run. Facing the most critical leap of his career, Frostad responded with a flawlessly executed trick that earned a decisive 98.50 from the judges.

"Yeah, I didn't really care because I was already super happy," Frostad said. "I could ski the last run with joy and just deliver a fun trick."

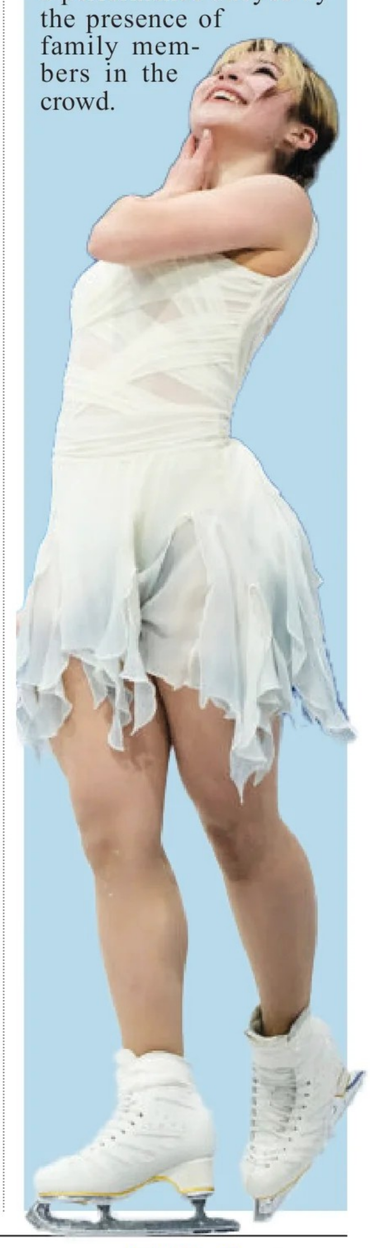
While Forehand showcased high-difficulty spins and flips — including a maneuver he had never previously landed — Frostad pushed the sport's progression in a different direction. Instead of launching backward off the ramp, he spun forward, defying convention and introducing a variation rarely, if ever, seen in big air competition. American Konnor Ralph attempted the first triple-cork 2160 — six full spins — in Olympic big air history, landing it to finish fifth, just behind teammate Troy Podmilsak. Defending champion Birk Ruud placed eighth after two crashes.

Liu surges into medal contention as US teammates falter

MILAN

Alysa Liu positioned herself squarely in the hunt for Olympic gold, delivering a poised and powerful short program at the 2026 Winter Olympics while her U.S. teammates stumbled.

The reigning world champion executed the most difficult combination attempted in the women's field — a triple lutz-triple loop — to finish just two points behind Japan's leader Ami Nakai. Liu sits third overall, directly behind two-time world champion Kaori Sakamoto heading into Thursday's free skate. "I felt super grounded and connected with my program on another level," Liu said after a performance buoyed by the presence of family members in the crowd.



Koenen claims record eighth Summit League weekly honor

FARGO

Avery Koenen added another accolade to her remarkable season, earning her eighth Summit League Peak Performer of the Week award and setting a new conference single-season record.

The Summit League announced the honor after Koenen powered North Dakota State Bison to a dominant 87-51 victory over in-state rival North Dakota Fighting Hawks last week.

With the recognition, Koenen surpassed former Oral Roberts Golden Eagles standout Kevi Luper, who held the previous mark with seven weekly awards during the 2009-10 season.

In the lone game of the week, Koenen delivered one of her finest performances of the year. The junior forward poured in a season-high 29 points while grabbing a game-best 13 rebounds. She also recorded a career-high four blocks, showcasing her impact on both ends of the floor. The outing marked her 17th double-double of the season, tying her for third-most nationally.

Koenen's consistency has fueled one of the most impressive campaigns in program history. The Bison improved to 23-2 overall and remain unbeaten at 12-0 in league play. North Dakota State is riding a 21-game winning streak, positioning itself as a clear favorite heading into the postseason.

Her dominance has become a weekly storyline across the conference, with Koenen emerging as both a scoring force and defensive anchor. As the regular season winds down, the Bison will look to extend their streak when they host St. Thomas on Thursday evening at 7 p.m.

Lochner steers Germany to dominant Olympic two-man bobsled sweep

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

Johannes Lochner led a commanding German sweep of the Olympic two-man bobsled medals, capturing gold at the 2026 Winter Olympics in what he called the penultimate race of his international career.

Teaming with Georg Fleischhauer, Lochner completed the four-run competition in 3 minutes, 39.70 seconds — sealing victory by a massive 1.34-second margin, the largest in Olympic two-man bobsledding in 46 years.

It marked Lochner's third career Olympic medal and his first gold.

Germany's dominance was emphatic. Francesco Friedrich, a double gold medalist in both two- and four-man at the previous two Winter Games, partnered with Alexander Schuller to claim silver in 3:41.04. Adam Ammour and Alexander Schaller secured bronze in 3:41.52, completing the podium sweep.

The result underscored Germany's extraordinary season. Of the 24 medals available in two-man bobsled across the World Cup circuit and these Olympics, German sleds captured 23 — including every Olympic medal on offer.

For the United States, opening ceremony flagbearer Frank Del Duca and brakeman Josh Williamson finished fourth in 3:41.96.

The result matched the second-best American two-man Olympic finish in seven decades, trailing only the silver won by Steven Holcomb and Steven Langton in 2014.

Romania's Mihai Tentea and George Iordache placed fifth, equaling their nation's best Olympic two-man showing since 1972.

Germany also swept the podium at the 2022 Beijing Games and has now won 34 of 35 major two-man races — spanning World Cups, world championships and Olympics — in this four-year cycle, cementing its status as the sport's undisputed powerhouse.

QUICK READ

Meta's Zuckerberg faces questioning at youth addiction trial

Los Angeles

Meta Platforms CEO and billionaire Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is set to be questioned for the first time in a U.S. court on Wednesday about Instagram's effect on the mental health of young users, as a landmark trial over youth social media addiction continues. While Zuckerberg has previously testified on the subject before Congress, the stakes are higher at the jury trial in Los Angeles, California. Meta may have to pay damages if it loses the case, and the verdict could erode Big Tech's longstanding legal defense against claims of user harm.

Bayer retreats as investors sour on deal to settle Roundup litigation

Frankfurt

Bayer's shares slumped as much as 9.2% on Wednesday, wiping out the previous day's gains, as investors questioned whether a proposed $7.25 billion settlement of cancer lawsuits over its Roundup weedkiller would mark a decisive turnaround. The German pharmaceuticals and crop protection group said it had reached an agreement to resolve tens of thousands of current and future product liability claims, after years grappling with legal risks tied to Roundup, acquired in the 2018 takeover of Monsanto.

US stock futures trend higher as tech sentiment improves

Washintong

U.S. stock index futures gained on Wednesday as tech stocks advanced reflecting easing AI concerns, while investors awaited minutes from the Federal Reserve's most recent policy meeting for clues on the interest-rate outlook. Markets have been volatile, with the S&P 500 ending 0.1% higher after falling as much as 0.9% early in the session. The Nasdaq and the Dow also saw similar reversals. Wall Street's main indexes have been rocked this month by worries of disruption from rapidly improving AI tools that hit sectors from software to trucking. Broader AI-linked and megacap technology stocks had also lost ground as investors looked for stronger evidence the heavy investments in the technology were tangibly boosting revenue and profits. On Wednesday, most megacap and growth stocks rose in premarket trading. Nvidia was up 1.9% after the company said it had signed a multi-year deal to sell Meta Platforms millions of its current and future AI chips. Other megacaps also advanced.

AI will drive India's next decade of growth: Pichai

India is uniquely positioned to benefit from the AI revolution due to its scale, digital infrastructure and talent base

Continued from page 1

NEW DELHI

Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet Inc. and Google, on Wednesday said India stands at the beginning of a major technological transformation, with artificial intelligence set to play a defining role in shaping the country's future.

Speaking at an event, Pichai described the present period as a transformational moment, signalling the start of what he termed a decade-long shift powered by technology, innovation and large-scale AI adoption.

He emphasised that India is uniquely positioned to benefit from the AI revolution due to its scale, digital infrastructure and talent base. However, he cautioned that this opportunity also carries responsibility. According to Pichai, sustained investments in AI research and broad-based deployment across sectors will be essential to ensure long-

term impact. He stressed the importance of building strong foundational layers of AI so that its benefits extend across industries and reach every segment of society.

Highlighting India's rapid digital progress, Pichai noted that Indian users rank among the highest globally in adopting voice-based and image-based search technologies. This, he said, reflects the country's readiness to embrace innovation at scale. He also pointed out that India has emerged as one of the largest markets for Gemini, Google's AI-powered platform, underlining the growing integration of AI tools into everyday digital experiences.

Focusing on the future workforce, Pichai underscored the need to prepare students for a technology-driven era. Alphabet is partnering with Atal Tinkering Labs to introduce robotics and coding into classrooms, aiming to foster creativity, innovation and problem-solving skills among schoolchildren from an early stage.

Earlier in the day, Pichai met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss India's expanding AI ecosystem and potential collaboration opportunities. He reiterated that Google is embedding AI across healthcare, agriculture, startups and other critical sectors. Pichai concluded that with the right policies and investments, artificial intelligence can serve as a powerful engine for inclusive growth and sustained transformation in India.

Ex-min defends India AI Summit amid controversy

NEW DELHI

Amid the uproar over alleged mismanagement and chaos at the ongoing India AI Summit at Bharat Mandapam, former Information Technology minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Wednesday mounted a strong defence of what he described as the largest ever Artificial Intelligence congregation hosted by India.

The summit, held at the iconic Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, brought together technology giants, policymakers, industry leaders and innovators from across the globe for extensive deliberations on Artificial Intelligence and deep-tech advancements.

Chandrasekhar drew comparisons between AI summits conducted in India and those organised in Europe and other regions over the past two years. He underscored the scale and intensity of participation at the In-

dia AI Impact Summit 2026, stating that the event had already attracted reported attendance of over 300,000 participants. In contrast, he noted that previous summits elsewhere recorded participation only in the hundreds or a few thousands.

According to data shared by him, an AI Summit at Bletchley Park in the United Kingdom in November 2023 saw attendance in the hundreds. Similarly, a summit in Seoul, South Korea, in May 2024 witnessed limited participation, much of it through hybrid formats. Another gathering in Paris, France, in February 2025 drew a few thousand AI experts and enthusiasts, marking moderate engagement compared to India's scale.

He argued that the unprecedented turnout in India may have contributed to logistical challenges at the venue. Chandrasekhar maintained that the summit demonstrated India's growing stature in the global technology ecosystem and showcased its ability to harness innovation for the benefit of its 1.4 crore citizens.

However, the first-of-its-kind AI Summit also provided the Opposition with an opportunity to criticise the government, accusing it of inept and inefficient management. The controversy gained traction on social media, with netizens expressing mixed reactions. The Congress party launched a sharp attack, alleging that Artificial Intelligence, instead of being the highlight of the event, became a victim of a PR-hungry government, intensifying the political debate surrounding the summit.

FedEx to invest Rs 2,500 cr in cargo hub

NAVI MUMBAI

Express transportation major FedEx on Wednesday announced an investment of over Rs 2,500 crore to set up a fully automated cargo hub at the Navi Mumbai International Airport in partnership with the Adani Group. The proposed 300,000 sq. ft. facility will be developed in collaboration with Adani Airport Holdings Ltd. (AAHL) and is envisioned as a regional consolidation and redistribution hub.

According to a company statement, the long-term investment aims to leverage the airport's multimodal infrastructure and strengthen Western India's international trade corridor. Once operational, the facility is expected to generate more than 6,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities across logistics, warehousing, transportation and allied services.

The ground-breaking ceremony was held at the cargo terminal site in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, AAHL Director Jeet Adani, FedEx President and CEO Raj

Subramaniam, and FedEx CEO, Airline and COO, International, Richard Smith.

Speaking on the occasion, Jeet Adani said the development aligns with NMIA's long-term vision of building integrated infrastructure that enhances India's trade competitiveness. He highlighted the airport's proximity to the Jawaharlal Nehru Port, key industrial corridors and multimodal transport networks, positioning it as a strategic logistics gateway for Maharashtra and the country.

FedEx MEISA President Kami Viswanathan stated that India's global trade competitiveness increasingly depends on the reliability and speed of logistics infrastructure. Establishing the hub at NMIA will integrate FedEx's global network capabilities with India's fastest-growing trade corridor, offering enhanced speed, efficiency and predictability to customers.

The facility will be equipped with advanced automated sorting systems, dimensional scanning, high-speed screening technology and dedicated aircraft parking bays. It will support trade flows across Southeast Asia, West Asia, Europe and the United States, while enabling simultaneous processing of inbound and outbound shipments. The hub is expected to significantly benefit high-value and time-sensitive sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and perishables, while also strengthening export-import operations for MSMEs through lower logistics costs and faster turnaround times.

Liquor maker Radico Khaitan's COO Amar Sinha steps down

NEW DELHI

Liquor maker Radico Khaitan's Chief Operating Officer Amar Sinha has stepped down from his post due to personal reasons, joining Allied Blenders & Distillers as its new Managing Director. Sinha had previously served as Executive Director and CEO of BDA (now Allied Blenders & Distillers Ltd).

I hereby tender my resignation from the position of Chief Operating Officer of Radico Khaitan Limited due to personal reasons. I would like to be relieved from my responsibilities by 31 March 2026, he said in his resignation letter.

Sinha had joined Radico Khaitan in March 2017 as Chief Operating Officer.

It has been a privilege to serve in this capacity and contribute to the Company's growth journey, he added.

I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Board and my colleagues across the organisation for their support, collaboration, and trust during my tenure, Sinha said.

Last May, Radico Khaitan announced the withdrawal of its newly launched whisky brand 'Trikal' after facing severe backlash over the brand's name and imagery, which many claimed hurt religious sentiments.

In an official statement shared with IANS, the company had said it respects the voices of Indian citizens and, as a responsible organisation, has chosen to discontinue the brand following an internal review.

'Trikal' was never just a name -- it was intended as a tribute to India's timeless spirit, the company said, while explaining that the term comes from Sanskrit and refers to the past, present, and future.

Report criticises silence on China cyber attacks

BEIJING

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute has warned that the failure of major technology firms to publicly attribute cyber attacks to China undermines global deterrence, leaves citizens underinformed and reduces pressure on governments to respond effectively to mounting digital threats.

In a new report, the institute criticised US cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks for not explicitly naming China in relation to a recent cyber campaign. According to the report, such restraint may stem from concerns about potential retaliation against the company or its clients, as well as broader commercial considerations such as market access and business interests in China.

The think tank observed that many technology companies avoid directly attributing cyber activities to China due to fears of economic consequences. It contrasted the approaches of Palo Alto Networks and Google, noting that while one firm issued a generic warning about a global espionage campaign, the other publicly identified China as the leading source of cyber threats by volume.

Google's Threat Intelligence Group has stated that China leads global cyber threat campaigns, including operations targeting defence suppliers and advanced technologies such as drones and uncrewed systems. The report highlighted this

Think tank says avoiding attribution weakens deterrence against China-linked cyber threats.

transparency as a model for industry conduct, arguing that clear attribution strengthens public awareness and policy responses.

The institute stressed that without stronger cooperation between Western governments and industry, economic dependence on China could continue to outweigh security considerations. It warned that both governments and corporations risk treating their relationships with China as too big to fail, thereby tolerating security threats for fear of financial repercussions.

Calling for a patriotic partnership between governments and private firms, the report urged policymakers to create incentives that reward transparency and evidence-based attribution. Suggested measures include enhancing reputational capital and granting exclusive market access to firms that demonstrate openness about cyber threats.

The think tank also pointed to the three AUKUS nations as potential leaders in this effort, suggesting coordinated public policies to address commercial vulnerabilities linked to operations in China and to strengthen collective cybersecurity resilience.

India-UK join hands to launch Offshore Wind Taskforce

NEW DELHI

New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi and the UK's Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy launched the India–UK Offshore Wind Taskforce. British High Commissioner to India Lindy Cameron was also present on the occasion. Describing the India–UK Offshore Wind Taskforce as a working mechanism rather than a symbolic platform, Joshi said it has been constituted under Vision 2035 and the Fourth Energy Dialogue to provide strategic leadership and coordination for India's offshore wind ecosystem. While the United Kingdom has demonstrated global leadership in scaling offshore wind and developing mature supply chains, India brings scale, long-term demand and a rapidly expanding clean energy ecosystem, he observed. Calling the Taskforce a trustforce, Joshi said it reflects the confidence that India and the United Kingdom can work together to address real execution challenges. He urged that the platform deliver time-bound workstreams, measurable milestones and visible progress, converting global lessons into solutions tailored to Indian conditions. He outlined three practical pillars for cooperation: ecosystem planning and market design, including refined seabed leasing frameworks and credible revenue-certainty mechanisms; infrastructure and supply chains, including port modernisation, local manufacturing and specialised vessels; and financing and risk mitigation through blended finance structures and mobilisation of long-term institutional capital.

India-Spain relations will continue to strengthen: Sanchez

NEW DELHI

Spanish President Pedro Sanchez on Wednesday noted the excellent state of relations between Spain and India, stating after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi that they will continue to strengthen in the coming times.

Alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I have noted the excellent state of relations between Spain and India, which we will continue to strengthen. I have congratulated him on the organisation of the Summit on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence. We share the need to continue taking steps towards an AI that puts people at the centre, he posted on X after meeting PM Modi.

This is Sanchez's second visit to India in 15 months, following his visit in October 2024, as both countries are marking 2026 as the India-Spain Year of culture, tourism and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Spain-India Dual Year has Artificial Intelligence as one of its main themes.

During their meeting on Wednesday, both leaders discussed ways to boost the India-Spain friendship, especially in areas such as defence, security, technology and more.

Had a productive meeting with President Pedro Sanchez in Delhi. Discussed ways to boost the India-Spain friendship, especially in areas such as defence, security, technology and more. Our nations are marking 2026 as the India-Spain Year of Culture, Tourism and AI. This will deepen people-to-people linkages. Glad to see a big delegation of Universities also come to India. This too will go a long way in connecting our people, PM Modi posted on X after the meeting.

The historic FTA with the EU will have a very positive impact on the economic partnership with Spain and provide new opportunities to the people of our nations, he added.

President Sanchez arrived in the national capital earlier in the day to attend the AI Impact Summit 2026, a global platform focusing on the transformative role of artificial intelligence across industries and governance.

DESHGUJARAT

Guj Budget cover features Warli art, Kansari Devi

GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat government on Wednesday unveiled an eye-catching cover for the 2026-27 state budget, featuring the tribal Goddess Kansari Devi rendered in the traditional Warli art style. The budget cover was approved by State Finance Minister Kanu Desai, who is set to present the state budget for the fifth consecutive year.

Kansari Devi is venerated among tribal communities in Gujarat as a Goddess of prosperity. Traditionally, she is worshipped during weddings, the first harvest of new crops, and other auspicious household occasions.

Kansari Devi is considered the tribal equivalent of Moth-

er Annapurna. Her worship ensures abundance, wealth, and happiness. She is the foundational Goddess of prosperity for tribal people, and her blessings are sought for well-being and success, the state government stated.

Warli art, with a history of approximately 1,200 years, originates from the Warli community in South Gujarat's Valsad district and neighbouring Thane district in Maharashtra.

The art form is distinguished by white patterns applied using a paste of rice flour and water, traditionally created by women on walls.

The paintings typically depict daily life, community celebrations, agricultural activities, rituals, and nature.

Common motifs include dancing figures, women drawing water, herdsmen, domestic chores, and scenes of worship and festivals. Wild animals, birds, insects, and deities such as Nagadev, Panchora Dev, Indra Dev, Wagh Dev, and Kansari Devi also feature prominently.

In addition to white rice paste, natural pigments such as vermilion, red, black, honey, and charcoal are used to highlight details. Geometric shapes including triangles, circles, and squares along with lines, are frequently employed to structure the designs.

Warli art, despite its long history, faces challenges due to modernisation and changes in tribal life. Featuring it on the budget cover is an effort to preserve this traditional art form and keep it visible in public culture, an official said. The Warli artwork on this year's budget cover was created by Bina Hasmukh Patel, who has contributed to Gujarat's budget documents for the past four years.

Plans won't change despite mini-collapses: Kotak

India to persist with aggressive approach despite recent batting stumbles

AHMEDABAD

India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak has made it clear that the defending champions will not deviate from their aggressive blueprint in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup, despite a few stop-start performances in the league stage.

India have experienced brief collapses in multiple matches. Against the USA in Mumbai, they slipped from 45/2 to 77/6. In Delhi versus Namibia, a strong platform of 205/5 turned into 205/9 in the death overs. Even in the high-voltage clash against Pakistan in Colombo, momentum dipped after Ishan Kishan's dismissal, with Tilak

Varma and Hardik Pandya falling in quick succession.

However, Kotak backed the batters to stay fearless ahead of their final league fixture against the Netherlands at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

"Playing aggressive cricket is important. But because of a couple of failures, plans won't change. Plans change according to the situation," Kotak said. "It doesn't matter whether someone has scored runs in the last two innings or not. What the team needs in those conditions is more important." He cited skipper Suryakumar Yadav's measured knock against the USA as an example of situational awareness within an attacking framework. Kotak defended Tilak Varma, who managed 25 off 24 balls against Pakistan, stating that the left-hander executed the team's plan to consolidate after an early wicket.

"Sometimes if a couple of boundaries don't come, people see it differently. But we were focused on partnerships," he said.

Looking ahead, Kotak stressed that India will not treat the Netherlands clash lightly, especially with a crucial game against South Africa and potentially the final scheduled in Ahmedabad. "Momentum is important. We will play with the same intent," he added.

Tough road for Associates, says Scotland CEO Lindblade

MUMBAI

The packed international cricket calendar has made it "really tough" for Associate nations to secure meaningful exposure against established sides, Cricket Scotland chief executive Trudy Lindblade said, urging greater unity among emerging members.

Scotland were not part of the original 20-team roster for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup but earned a late entry after Bangladesh declined to tour India. Placed in Group C, the Scots finished third with one win from four matches, bowing out after a defeat to Nepal.

Lindblade stressed that limited access to regular fixtures remains a key hurdle. "It is really tough because that crowded schedule is making it harder for us to get more content. We need to work collectively," she said, highlighting the need for a consolidated front among Associate members within the International Cricket Council structure.

Associate nations seek regular fixtures, united push for global growth.

While matches against heavyweights such as England cricket team and Australia national cricket team are valuable, Lindblade said a broader mix of competitive fixtures would better aid development. "You don't always have to play the Englands and Australias of the world. A variety of opposition helps improve our cricket," she noted.

She also pointed to new opportunities, including the upcoming European T20 Premier League, where Scotland are founding partners alongside Ireland and the Netherlands. The league, she said, represents an exciting step in strengthening Europe's cricketing footprint.

On Scotland's late inclusion in the World Cup, Lindblade rejected suggestions of unfairness. "I wouldn't say it's unfair. I'd take it as an opportunity," she said, adding that the team embraced the challenge with a fearless mindset.

"We showed the might and fight of Scotland," she said, expressing pride in the team's spirited campaign.

PACERS FIRE UP INDIA WOMEN FOR SERIES PUSH

CANBERRA

Buoyed by a clinical bowling show in the rain-curtailed opener, Harmanpreet Kaur's India will look to seal the three-match T20I series against Australia when the sides clash in the second game here on Thursday.

The visitors rode on a fiery spell from seamer Arundhati Reddy, whose four-wicket burst dismantled the Australian line-up and restricted the hosts to 133 after they failed to bat out their 20 overs. Fellow pacer Renuka Singh complemented her brilliantly with two tight wickets, giving India a rare pace-driven edge in conditions that demanded discipline.

Traditionally reliant on spin through Deepti Sharma and Shree Charani, India would be heartened by the six wickets shared by their quicks — a significant boost ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup in England later this year.

With rain in Sydney forcing a result via the Duckworth-Lewis system, only openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma spent meaningful time at the crease. However, given the core group's recent match exposure in the Women's Premier League, the think tank remains confident about the batting unit's readiness. Jemimah Rodrigues, who has tormented Australia in the past, adds solidity in the middle order.

India eye unassailable lead after commanding rain-hit series opener.

Australia, under new skipper Sophie Molineux, will be desperate to bounce back and level the series.

Their star-studded top order featuring Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry and Ashleigh Gardner faltered badly in the opener, with six batters dismissed for single digits. For India, clinching the T20I rubber against the world's most successful side would not only provide momentum but also serve as an ideal dress rehearsal ahead of the global showpiece later this year.

Ukraine condemns decision to restore Russian, Belarusian flags

KYIV

Ukraine has strongly criticised the decision to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete under their national flags at the 2026 Milan-Cortina Paralympics, calling it "outrageous" and a betrayal of sporting values.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) confirmed that six Russian and four Belarusian athletes will be permitted to participate under their own flags, rather than as neutral competitors. The move effectively overturns restrictions imposed following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine's Sports Minister Matviy Bidny condemned the decision in a sharply worded statement. "The decision to allow killers and their accomplices to compete under national flags is both disappointing and outrageous," he wrote on social media. He added that Russian and Belarusian flags "have no place at international sporting events that stand for fairness, integrity and respect."

Under the allocation, Russia has been awarded two quota places each in alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and snowboarding, while Belarus will have four athletes in cross-country skiing at the 2026 Winter Paralympics.

Ravindra rediscovers touch as New Zealand enter Super 8s

CHENNAI

Rachin Ravindra admitted that chasing runs too hard only complicates matters as he returned to form with a composed unbeaten 59 to guide New Zealand national cricket team into the Super 8s of the T20 World Cup with a win over Canada on Tuesday.

After an underwhelming start to the tournament across India and Sri Lanka — including illness in Mumbai and a string of low scores — the left-hander found his rhythm at the right time. His measured knock, anchored by a crucial partnership with Glenn Phillips, ensured New Zealand chased down the target comfortably.

"It obviously means a lot. You always want to score runs in T20, but it's a fickle game. The more you try to search for runs, the worse it gets," Ravindra said. "It's about playing with freedom and putting the team first."

Ravindra, who shot to prominence during the 2023 ODI World Cup in India, acknowledged that adapting to the shortest format remains a learning curve. "I'm still young in my career and learning every day. T20 is evolving, and some days are different," he said.

He revealed that giving himself a little more time at the crease and not obsessing over strike rate helped him regain fluency. "I trusted my positions and knew the strike rate would take care of itself. Having GP at the other end took pressure off me," he added.

The 26-year-old also spoke about the challenge of switching between formats and contributing with the ball when required, learning from skipper Mitchell Santner. With momentum on their side, New Zealand now look poised to carry this confidence into the Super 8 stage.

J&K storm into maiden Ranji Trophy final

KALYANI

Jammu and Kashmir created history by entering the Ranji Trophy final for the first time in 67 years, defeating two-time champions Bengal cricket team by six wickets on day four of the semifinal on Wednesday.

Chasing a modest 126 at the Bengal Cricket Academy Ground, J&K completed the task in 34.4 overs. Vanshaj Sharma remained unbeaten on 43, while Abdul Samad chipped in with an unconquered 30 as the duo stitched a crucial 55-run partnership to guide the visitors home.

The foundation for the victory was laid by pace spearhead Auqib Nabi, who claimed nine wickets in the match to dismantle Bengal's batting across both innings. Bengal, after posting 328 in their first innings, were bundled out for just 99 in 25.1 overs in the second, setting up a manageable target.

Jammu and Kashmir, who made their debut in the Ranji Trophy in the 1959-60 season, had rarely been considered title contenders. Their previous best came in 2013-14 when they reached the knockout stage after over a decade. This time, however, they went a step further to script an unprecedented chapter in their cricketing journey.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated the team, praising the players, coaches and support staff for their dedication and collective effort. "On my behalf, and on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, I extend heartfelt congratulations. I hope the day is not far when we will see players from J&K playing a very important role in the national team," he said.

Calling it a triumph of teamwork, Abdullah added that the achievement would inspire young sportspersons across the Union Territory and reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening sports infrastructure and nurturing emerging talent.

Pakistan hockey captain blasts PHF after Australia tour fiasco

LAHORE

Pakistan hockey captain Shakeel Ammad Butt has sharply criticised the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) following what he described as a humiliating and chaotic tour of Australia during the FIH Pro League.

Speaking to reporters upon arrival at Lahore airport, Butt alleged gross mismanagement by federation officials, claiming players were left stranded and without proper accommodation during the tour.

"We can't work with this current management. When players have to clean the kitchen and wash dishes before going to play a match, what result do you expect from us?" an angry Butt said. According to the captain, the team waited 13-14 hours at Sydney airport before travelling to Canberra. Matters worsened when the squad reached their hotel, only to be informed that no advance payment had been made and no booking existed in their name. The players reportedly spent hours roaming the streets before alternative arrangements were made.

"What was pathetic was that accommodation was arranged for only 10 days when we had to stay 13 days. We had to move into a cheaper residence after that," Butt added.

The controversy deepened after the state-run Pakistan Sports Board confirmed it had released over 10 million rupees to the PHF for the team's hotel expenses.

ITF W100: Sahaja rallies to storm into second round

BENGALURU

Sahaja Yamalapalli mounted a spirited comeback to overcome higher-ranked Dayeon Back of Korea in the opening round of the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium.

In a contest that mirrored her first-round battle at the same venue last year, India's top-ranked women's singles player battled fluctuations in form before sealing a 6-2, 1-6, 6-2 victory in two hours and 18 minutes.

Ranked 416 in the world, Sahaja started brightly against the 306th-ranked Korean, striking cleanly from the baseline and holding serve comfortably to pocket the opening set. However, her rhythm deserted her in the second as unforced errors crept in and Back's relentless retrieving forced longer rallies. The Korean capitalised to level the match.

With the decider finely poised at 2-2, Sahaja rediscovered her intensity. Her forehand regained its sting and her serve found extra bite, allowing her to reel off four consecutive games and close out the match emphatically.

"Yeah, it started off well. In the second, I was fighting but I wasn't feeling the ball very well. Maybe I was being too passive," Sahaja said after the match. "I regrouped in the third and that helped. Physically, I feel much better than I did in previous tournaments."

In an all-Indian clash, wild card Vaishnavi Adkar defeated Shruti Ahlawat 6-1, 7-6(6) to progress. Meanwhile, Russia's Erika Andreeva advanced after Argentina's Nicole Fossa Huergo retired early in the second set following a tight opening tie-break.

The prestigious W100 event continues this week in Cubbon Park, drawing strong international participation.

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